EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEXT OF ANTIQUITY

Edited by David Brakke, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Jörg Ulrich

Anders-Christian Jacobsen
Jörg Ulrich
David Brakke
(eds.)

Critique and Apologetics

Jews, Christians and Pagans in Antiquity

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This book contains 13 contributions from an international conference held in 2007. The idea of the conference was to investigate the confrontations and the cultural, philosophical and religious exchange between different religious groups in antiquity and to establish a more comprehensive theory about what apologetics was considered to be both in the context of antiquity and from the perspective of modern scholarship: is it possible to define a literary genre called apologetics? Is it possible to talk about apologetics as a certain kind of discourse which is not limited to a special kind of texts? Which argumentative strategies are implied in apologetic discourses? The essays in this volume present a new approach to these questions.

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Preface

In this book we have collected 13 contributions from a conference held at the beginning of 2007. The title of the conference was **Jews, Christians and Pagans in Antiquity - Critique and Apologetics.** The conference concluded a research project with the same title at the Faculty of Theology, University of Aarhus. The project was inaugurated in January 2004. The idea of the research project was to investigate the confrontations and the cultural, philosophical and religious exchange between different religious groups in antiquity.

As its starting point, the project took non-Christian and non-Jewish Greek and Roman (traditionally known as pagan) critique of Judaism and Christianity, along with the Jewish and Christian apologies against this tendency. We have further worked on ancient Jewish, Christian and Greco-Roman sources which in one way or another reflect the dialogues and conflicts between religious groups in the period from about 100 BC until about 500 AD. We have thus worked on many different kinds of texts - not just those which traditionally are referred to as apologetic texts. As a consequence we have tried to establish a more comprehensive theory about what apologetics was considered to be both in the context of antiquity and from the perspective of modern scholarship: is it possible to define a literary genre called apologetics? Is it possible to talk about apologetics as a certain kind of discourse which is not limited to a special kind of texts? Which argumentative strategies are implied in apologetic discourses? Many questions like these were asked and to a certain degree answered during the project period and finally at the conference in 2007. The project was divided into three phases.

Phase 1: The Pre-Constantine Epoch

Some of the research questions and themes in this phase were:

- Is it possible to define apologetics as a literary genre: if so, how? Which social, cultural and religious environments produce apologetic literature? Which social, cultural and religious events unleashed the publication of apologetic literature?
- Is apologetics found in non-literary forms? In so far as most of the members of the research seminar base their work on textual traditions, it appeared to be relevant to explore whether apologetics in antiquity and late-antiquity are expressed in other media, e.g. different forms of visual art, architecture, epitaphs etc.
- We investigated the reception of Greek and Roman philosophy by Jewish and Christian theologians and other forms of exchanges between Judaism, Christianity and Greco-Roman culture and religion.
- We looked at examples of apologetics from the Ancient Greek and Roman traditions with special emphasis on Socrates' Apology written by Plato. This apology became the pattern for much apologetics and therefore played an important part in connection with our definition of the concept of apologetics.
- We investigated the Greek and Roman critique of Christianity until Constantine the Great.
- We investigated Jewish apologetics. Josephus' *Contra Apionem* and works by Philo and Aristobul were included.
- We investigated early Christian apologetics until Constantine the Great. Certain New Testament writings (Acta and 1 Peter) as well as writings by the so-called Christian Apologists (e.g. Justin, Athenagoras and Tertullian) played an important role here. Even though Origen is not traditionally included in this group, he is still, because of his great work *Contra Celsum* is an important representative of this group.

Phase 2: The Constantinian Revolution

The aim of this phase was:

- to investigate the change of power between the Greco-Roman culture and Christianity as well as the impact of the new roles on the confrontations and exchanges between the Greco-Roman culture and religiosity and Christianity.
- to deal with the works of Eusebius that are relevant for our theme.
- to discuss Lactantius' Apology for the Christians and Emperor Julian's work *Against the Galileans.*

Phase 3: The Post-Constantine Era

The aim of this phase was:

- to account for the Greco-Roman pagan critique of Christianity in the post-Constantine era. Here pronounced anti-Christian writings were included (e.g. Hierocles whose fragments are preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea).
- to account for post-Constantinian Christanity's defence against the contemporary pagan critique. This group of writings includes, e.g., writings by Eusebius, Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria as well as Augustine's epoch-making *City of God,* which chronologically completes the period covered by the research project.
- to study the tendencies to an idea of freedom of religion seen in, e.g. Tertullian (*Ad Scapulam*) and in Symmachus, Libanius, Themistius. The question was why such an idea did not develop fully in late antiquity, and did not appear until early modern times.

During the project period an international network grew up around the project. Some of the participants in this network gave lectures at the concluding conference. These lectures are presented in this book in a re-written form.

Anders Klostergaard Petersen's essay *The Diversity of Apologetics: From Genre to a Mode of Thinking* is the first in this volume. Petersen discusses whether it is possible to speak of an apologetic genre. He concludes that it is possible if the concept of *genre* is understood not as a static category, but as something fluid and developing. As part of this endeavour to establish a new definition of genre, Petersen presents a typology of apologetics which enables us to distinguish between different levels of apologetic intensity in texts which include apologetic motives or elements.

At the conference Judith Lieu was asked to talk about the theme *Jews, Christian and 'Pagans' in Conflict*. In her lecture - of which you find a rewritten version in this book - Lieu challenges the way of thinking which lies behind the formulation of the title. Much more traditional research has followed the descriptions of early Christian apologetic texts and martyr-narratives which describe the situation in the first centuries of our era as characterised by conflict between fixed religious groups - Jews, Christians and Pagans. Lieu challenges this way of understanding the situation. The identities were more complex and fluid. According to Lieu this means that the conflict model only can grasp some aspects of the situation. Many aspects of life in the first centuries of our era were characterised by consensus. Read in this perspective the apologetic texts show how the apologists struggle to find common ground for co-existence.

Oda Wischmeyer writes about *Criticism of Judaism in Greek and Roman Sources*. She examines Greek and Roman sources from the period 4th century BC to 2nd century AD. The critics of Judaism in these sources cover a wide field from mere stereotypes, which shows that the authors are not really interested in Jews and Judaism, to harsh attacks on Jews accusing them for being the worst kind of barbarians.

Anders-Christian Jacobsen writes about *Main topics in Early Christian Apologetics*. The article concentrates on four types of charges which according to the apologists were raised against Christians. These are charges for being atheists, for inventing a new religion, for 'political' crimes, and charges for ethical misbehaviour. At this background Jacobsen describes which apologetic strategies the apologists make use of in their defence against these charges. And finally he tries to identify the audiences of the apologies.

Eve-Marie Becker discusses the theme *Jews and Christians in Conflict* from the perspective of Revelation 2-3. Becker tries to distinguish between polemical and satirical elements in these chapters in order to see what a distinction between these two categories can add to the understanding of language of conflict.

Barbara Aland writes about *Apologetic Motives in Gnostic Texts*. According to Aland it is hard to find any apologetic motives in Gnostic texts. Aland therefore looks for similarities and differences between apologetic texts and Gnostic texts. It is easier to find differences than similarities. Among the differences Aland mentions different audiences, different ways of using philosophy, different theologies: for example the apologists had a more rational way of conceiving God while the Gnostics had a more revelatory approach to the divine. As the most important similarity, Aland mentions the common understanding of God as initiator of any relation between God and humans.

Friedrich Avemarie explores rabbinic texts to look for traces of apologetics. According to Avemarie it seems at the first sight to be a futile endeavour, because it seems to be clear to all working on rabbinic material that these texts do not contain any apologetics. Fortunately Avemarie accepted the invitation to talk and write about this theme. The outcome of this work is not that Avemarie proves that rabbinic texts are filled with apologetics. However, while looking for apologetics Avemarie identifies different kinds of dialogs where rabbis are in dialog with non-Jewish representatives from the Roman 'side', or with Jews of different opinions. In the first case, the partners in the dialogue are the equivalent to those of early Christian apologies. The rabbinic material, however, do not seem to represent a situation of conflict. In the rabbinic material, Avemarie also finds martyr narratives which - like the Christian martyr narratives - include some apologetic elements.

Jakob Engberg contributes with an article about the relations between martyr literature and apologetics. Engberg shows that in both kinds of early Christian texts we find accusations against Christians for ungodliness, superstition and debauchery. These accusations and the defences against them are more developed in the apologetic texts than in the martyr texts, but according to Engberg the accusations

and the defences are clearly related. This is because the martyr-narratives probably originated from the same milieu as the apologies.

Jörg Ulrich's article is entitled *Apologetics and Orthodoxy*. The title reflects the wish of the conference organisers to seek and describe the connections between the research project on apologetics, which was closed at the conference, and a new project on the normativity of religious texts in antiquity. Ulrich divides his contribution in two parts. In the first part he discusses 'apologetics and orthodoxy'. His main thesis here is that early Christian apologetics from the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD created and defined so called 'orthodox' Christianity, because 'defence' always includes a description of what is defended. Apologetics must therefore include or lead to definitions of orthodoxy. In the second part of his article he discusses the theme 'orthodoxy and apologetics'. His thesis is here that established orthodoxy necessarily leads to apologetics, because all positions which claim to be orthodox will - sooner or later - be attacked for being un-orthodox or heretic. When this happens, the reaction will be apologetic.

Lorenzo Perrone deals with the theme *Prayer and Cult in Early Christian Apologetics*. On the one hand the early Christian apologists very often attack non-Christian cultic activities. On the other, they are sparse in their descriptions of the Christian cult. Perrone seeks to explain this situation: first, by noting that the cultic activities were considered to be for Christians alone. This is the more traditional analysis of the situation. Second, he stresses that the whole aim of early Christian apologetics was to 'translate' Christianity into a form which would be understandable for 'the others' - the non-Christians. In this process the apologists wanted to avoid giving the impression that Christian cult consisted merely of adapted forms of pagan cults. Therefore they avoided the theme. However, Perrone find brief remarks and a few longer passages in the second and third century Christian apologetics which provide important details of early Christian liturgy, cult, and prayer.

John M. G. Barclay contributes with an article on *Josephus' Contra Apionem as Jewish Apologetics*. According to Barclay *Contra Apionem* is the only ancient Jewish treatise which fully belongs to the apologetic genre. Barclay defines the 'apologetic genre' as consisting of texts whose only or main purpose is apologetic. He therefore distin-

guishes between texts which belong to the genre of apology and texts which include apologetic rhetoric. Some of Philo's texts could be said to belong to the last category. Barclay further looks for ancient parallels to *Contra Apionem*. Barclay shows that apologetics was popular in Greek and Roman tradition. However, he finds that *Contra Apionem* is unique because it is an apology for a whole ethnic group and because the whole text is constituted as an apology. *Contra Apionem* does not *contain* apology it *is* one, as Barclay formulates it.

Maijastina Kahlos deals with Lactantius' critique of Roman civic religion. According to Kahlos, Lactantius 'lumps' all kinds of polytheistic religion together under the label 'paganism'. This paganism he constructs using all the worst examples of immorality etc. which can be found in older critique of Roman religions from, for example, Varro and Cicero. Lactantius criticises this construction of Roman 'paganism' and compares it with Christianity, which is described by monotheism, high moral standards etc. Kahlos not only criticises Lactantius and other old apologists for criticising caricatures of Roman religion. She also criticises modern scholars for having an uncritical approach to Lactantius' and other Christian apologists' negative construction of Roman religion.

Karla Pollmann writes about *Augustine as Apologist*. Pollmann shows how many scholars consider Augustine to be a liminal figure in relation to apologetics. Some thinks that he does not belong to the group classical apologists, others that he represents the final climax of classical Christian apology. Pollmann distinguishes between apologetics understood as *content*, and apologetics understood as *method*. After that Pollmann shows how strongly apologetics as method as well as content is represented in two of Augustine's major works - *The City of God* and *De Genesi ad Litteram*. In the *City of God* Augustine's opponents are (at least formally) non-Christians while the opponents or addressees in *De Genesi ad Litteram* are Christians. However, Pollmann finds many similarities between the two works in content and in argumentative strategies. She characterises the two works in this way: "Whereas the *City of God* is an apologetic work with an interpretative edge, the *De Genesi ad Litteram* is an interpretative work with an apologetic edge".

These contributions to the conference and to this book show how important and fruitful the 'internationalisation' of the local Aarhus project has been. The editors want to use this opportunity to thank all our col-

leagues who have contributed to this project for their willingness to take part in the scholarly discussions and in the publication of these.

Another very important element in this international network is a continously developing cooperation between Prof. Jörg Ulrich and the people connected to his Chair in Church History at the Faculty of Theology at the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg (www.theologie.uni-halle.de/kirchengeschichte/147839_156523/) and the project group at the Faculty of Theology, Aarhus University (www.relnorm.au.dk/en/theme1/index-theme1). This cooperation also resulted in a joint edition of this conference volume, among other things. The editors have been assisted by Christian Guth, Sara Hönsch, Bastian Lemitz, Georg Rosentreter and Beate Ueltzen - all from Halle. They successfully took on an enormous task in standardizing the footnotes, the abbrevations, etc. Marlene Jessen from Aarhus and Beate Ueltzen from Halle took care of the layout of the book and David Alan Warburton improved the English of several of the contributions. We thank all of them warmly for their assistance. The editors also want to thank The Aarhus University Research Foundation for supporting the book financially.

Jörg Ulrich, Halle and Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Aarhus
Christmas 2008

The Diversity of Apologetics: From Genre to a Mode of Thinking*

Anders Klostergaard Petersen

The aim of this essay is to refine the understanding of apologetics by developing a typology capable of encompassing a number of very different phenomena traditionally subsumed under the umbrella term: apologetics. In order to avoid misunderstandings, let me from the outset emphasise that I do not attempt to provide a conclusive answer to the multiplicity of problems that pertain to apologetics. After four years of study of different Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian apologetic compositions dating to a period covering almost a millennium and originating in geographical settings that embrace a wide area of the past Mediterranean world, I recognise the elusive nature of the topic. As soon as one begins to think that one has firm grip on apologetics, the issue opens itself to new forms, and appears under new guises. The Protean nature of apologetics both as a scholarly category and as an ancient indigenous classification notwithstanding, I believe that the members of

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* The article is a summary of some of the more theoretical work that I have been conducting in connection with the research area on *Apologetics and Criticism. Pagans, Christians and Jews in Antiquity* situated at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Aarhus during the period 2002-2006. Most of this work is available in Danish only. I expect, however, to revise and refine some of my publications on the topic and publish them in English in the close future. I would also like to emphasise to what extent I have benefited from the discussions in our local research group over the years. Simultaneously, I am indebted to the conversations with the great number of colleagues and friends from abroad who have participated in the project during the previous years. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to my Faculty that has generously given me travel grants during the time of the research project. Finally, I want to thank John Ranelagh, who once again has improved my written English and made interesting suggestions to the argument.

the Aarhus project on apologetics have gained a more thorough and refined understanding of the phenomenon; but we have not come close to a definitive perception of the issue. There are still many more paths - both of a theoretical and of an empirical nature - to be pursued. Hopefully, the results of the present volume and the preceding conference occasioning the book will provide not only a step forward on the project on apologetics, but also a springboard for continued work in a fascinating field that - contrary to so many other topics of the ancient world - is far from exhausted.

The study of apologetics, due to its comprehensive nature has the advantage that it invites scholars from a wide array of fields to work together. The widespread appearance of the phenomenon in the ancient world as well as its culturally intersecting character precludes studies of individual traditions in isolation from other cultural and social contexts. It encourages a form of scholarship prepared to see the intertwining and interactional nature of abstract entities like Judaism, Hellenism, and Christianity, previously often conceptualised to represent distinct and separate cultural and social units.

Since apologetic writings by their very nature are a token of identity-formation persistently involved in the creation of the respective identities, which they purport to defend or to attack, the study of these texts provides us with an outstanding opportunity to examine not only ancient ways of world-making, but also the fragile basis of cultural maintenance. Far from being only a matter of sustaining particular world-views divided into clear-cut categories between 'them' and 'us', apologetic writings are to an equal extent a matter of creating the cultural lines of demarcation that are far from evident in the social world of their authors. In fact, there would be no need to engage in apologetics, were it not for the discrepancy between map and territory, the gap between the actual social world and the ideal worlds of the authors of these compositions. The study of apologetics, therefore, gives us an extraordinary glimpse into different strategies of cultural intervention, social maintenance, and identity-formation in the ancient world. At the same time, the examination makes it clear that in order to obtain an adequate understanding of the individual traditions, it is necessary to study them in their larger cultural and social contexts.

In this essay I seek to present some theoretical reflections on one particular subject that not only has proved influential in the most recent scholarly debate on the topic, but also has an important bearing on our understanding of apologetics altogether: the problem of to what extent we can speak of an apologetic genre, and what the existence of such a genre may entail for our general conception of apologetics. Particularly, I shall concentrate on the problem of the range of works and forms of writings that can be classified as apologetic with the over-all aim in mind of developing a typology that will enable us to distinguish between different gradations of the phenomenon from an *etic* as well as an *emic* perspective.

1. The Abandonment of Apology as a Genre Designation

The problem of an apologetic genre has been vigorously debated in recent years both with regard to early Jewish writings predating Josephus and in connection with early Christian allegedly apologetic compositions. If one were to pursue the prevalent trend in the current discussion of Jewish apologetics as well as the debate about Christian apologetics, it would be fairly easy to deconstruct the classification of apologies altogether as denoting a distinct literary genre sharing a number of discursive properties with regard to both form and content. After all, the writings - traditionally classified under this nomenclature - appear to represent a wide spectrum of different genres that precludes a common genre categorisation.

When we initiated the project on apologetics four years ago by studying and reading Origen's *Contra Celsum* in its entirety, I came to the preliminary conclusion that there were no points in pursuing a notion of *apologia* as a distinct literary genre. The differences between, for instance, Origen's extensive writing and the relatively brief apology of Aristides are so remarkable that it would be unreasonable, indeed, to subsume them together under a common generic rubric. The more so, if one also were to include Jewish writings into the category: an endeavour not altogether strange, since today it is exactly one hundred years since Johannes Geffcken became famous for his concise formulation that Christian apologetics are the daughter or the heiress of the Jewish apologetic tradition. Once again, rather than seeing the similarities of genre between the two traditions - if one, at all, can speak of the two traditions as distinct

and homogeneous generic entities - one is struck by the differences. The dissimilarities between, for instance, Josephus' *Contra Apionem* and the two apologies of Justin are so conspicuous that it seems impossible to classify them under the same generic label.

Even if we move into the Jewish tradition itself, there is a world of difference between the alleged early Jewish apologists like Aristobul and the author of Aristeas on the one hand, and the later tradition of Josephus' *Contra Apionem* and the remaining fragments of Philo's *Hypothetica* on the other hand. At this point, we shall not even take the recent radicalisation of Tcherikover's pioneer work by Erich Gruen into consideration, whether, in fact, it makes sense at all to speak of a pre-Roman Jewish Alexandrian apologetic tradition, and thus to talk about a Jewish apologetic trajectory as a homogeneous and well-defined entity.

The problems do not diminish, if we take a look at the Greco-Roman tradition. Apart from a few scanty hints, there is only a limited mention of apologies and apologetics in the rhetorical and epistolary handbooks. Plato's *Apology* - in a dominant current of the history of research on the subject "the epitome of an apology" - seems to lie far away from both the later Jewish apologetic works and the Christian apologetic writings except, perhaps, for Justin's two apologies.[1] If we proceed to the Latin tradition and attempt to shed light on the genre by the inclusion of Apuleius' *Apology* or *On Magic*, things do not become easier. How is it possible to categorise this work with, for instance, Theodoret's *Curatio* or the *Cure for Hellenic Maladies*?

Given the difficulties in subsuming all the different apologetic writings under a common generic umbrella term, it is perhaps reason-

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[1] J.-C. Fredouille, *De l'Apologie de Socrate aux Apologies de Justin*, in: J. Granarolo (ed.), *Hommage à René Braun, vol.* 2, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Nice 54, Nizza 1990, 1-22 (14): "La conception et la composition de *I Apol* rappellent donc si éntroitement celles de l'*ApS* [i.e. Plato's *Apology*] platonicienne qu'il ne paraît pas nécessaire d'y insister d'avantage. Seule la lecture personelle d'*ApS* par Justin peut expliquer de telles affinités. L'apologiste chrétien ne s'est pas contenté de nourrir son ouvrage de certains themes développés par Socrate dans le plaidoyer que lui fait prononcer Platon, il a choici ce plaidoyer comme modèle littéraire."

able to acknowledge with a number of recent scholars writing on the subject that there never was an apologetic genre proper. Even if we disregard writings from a non-Christian context, we must with regard to the Christian works - traditionally classified as apologies - concede the fuzzy nature of the category itself. The classification of a particular group of Christian writings as apologies appears for the first time in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* dating to the fourth century, where the category denotes those writings only that were - whether fictitiously or not - addressed to the emperor in his role as ultimate judge.[2] The category encompasses works like Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Melito and Apollinaris of Hierapolis, Miltiades, and the *Apology* of Tertullian. It is noticeable, however, that writings frequently categorised by modern scholarship as apologies like Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, Tatian's *To the Greeks*, Theophilus' *To Autolycus*, Minucius Felix' *Octavius*, Tertullian's *On the Philosopher's Cloak* and *To Scapula*, as well as the works of Apollinaris *To the Greeks* and *To the Jews* among numerous other compositions are not subsumed by Eusebius under the generic rubric of apology.

In an informative article on Eusebius' apologetic writings, Michael Frede emphasises two noteworthy facts about the Eusebian understanding of apology. First, Eusebius appears to employ the term:

> [...] restrictively to refer specifically to writings addressed to the emperor on behalf of Christians and Christianity. These, it would seem, constitute a definite literary genre, defined, on the one hand, by the legal institution of such submissions to the emperor and, on the other, by its specifically Christian purpose. But second, Eusebius also recognizes a rather extended use of the term for any writing composed in defence of Christianity - for instance, in defence of the authority of writings regarded as canonical, and hence definitive of Christianity. And Eusebius himself stresses that *apologiai*,

[2] M. Frede, *Eusebius' Apologetic Writings*, in: M. Edwards / M. Goodman / S. Price / C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, Oxford 1999, 223-250 (227).

> thus widely understood, comprise writings of quite different literary genres.[3]

The problems pertaining to the attempt to find a common genre for the variety of writings traditionally understood to be of an apologetic nature and to belong to one and the same genre, therefore, seem increasingly to capsize. Even if we neglect the possibility that Eusebius' taxonomy might be idiosyncratic and confined to the fourth century only, we are left with two noticeable problems. First, how should we conceive of the relationship between Eusebius' two uses of the term and the employment of the category in contemporary scholarship? Secondly, if we decide to follow the Eusebian line of thought we have the advantage that we shall be able to distinguish between a more comprehensive use of the term and a more narrow definition. On the other hand, we are then confronted with the problem that has conspicuously haunted much traditional scholarship on apologetics, that is, that the category is confined to a particular set of Christian writings of the pre-Constantinian era. In this manner, we are prevented from seeing how the specific Christian writings relate to works outside a Christian context - be they Jewish or Greco-Roman of a non-Christian nature. Additionallly, we are precluded from seeing how the early Christian works relate to Christian writings of the post-Constantinian era. And, finally, we shall not be able to recognise the obvious connections between these writings and other types of Christian literature that also date to the pre-Constantinian period. In conclusion, there is good reason to give up the idea of apologies as designating a distinct and well-defined genre. It appears more adequate to the historical circumstances if we - complementary with the predominant view of current scholarship - abandon the notion of apologies as embodying a distinct genre.

In an article on the Greek apologists of the Second century, Frances Young endorses the view that: "Literary genre is not the best way of characterizing what the second-century Greek apologists have in common." She asserts that "their common intent is justification of an anomalous social position, whether in the eyes of

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[3] Frede, 1999, 229.

others or themselves, whether in real live courtroom situations or more informally."[4]

Young's viewpoint is to a large extent characteristic of the majority of essays included in the recent anthology *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* edited by Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman and Simon Price.[5] It is, therefore, hardly surprising that Averil Cameron in a review article of this anthology conclusively contends that: "It looks therefore as though it is no longer fruitful to insist on a genre of apologetic, or a definition which refers to literary form, even if we leave aside the broader problems associated with the notion of genre as a term of literary analysis."[6] Cameron suggests that we look at apologetics as a mode of writing rather than a genre. In this manner, we shall - according to Cameron - be able to pursue the diffusion of apologetic argument and technique across a wide range of writings. This position is not only typical of the English-speaking world, but has also made its impact on the most recent and comprehensive German study of Christian apologetics by Michael Fiedrowicz.

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[4] F. Young, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century*, in: M. Edwards / M. Goodman / S. Price / C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, Oxford 1999, 81-104 (103f.). Cf. the corresponding statements on pages 82 and 90, at which (p. 90) it is argued that: "If genre is narrowly defined in terms of literary types, then a common genre seems out of the question, though we would appear to have largely common intent and a good deal of overlap in content."

[5] Edwards et al. (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, Oxford 1999.

[6] A. Cameron, *Apologetics in the Roman Empire - a Genre of Intolerance?*, in: J.-M. Carrié / R.L. Testa (eds.), *"Humana Sapit". Études d'Antiquité Tardive Offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini*, Bibliothèque de l'Antiquité Tardive 3, Turnhout 2002, 219-227 (221). Cf. p. 227: "To conclude: I hope to have shown, through discussion of these interesting essays (that is, the collection of essays included in the previously mentioned anthology edited by M. Edwards, M. Goodman, and S. Price), that in relation to the Christian examples, apologetic is not a genre but a tone or method of argument; that it continued as a major drive of Christian writing throughout late antiquity and after." Cf. the emphasis by J.-C. Fredouille, *L'apologétique chrétienne antique. Metamorphoses d'un genre polymorphe*, in: REAug 41 (1995), 201-216 (206) on the Protean character of the writings.

Similar to Young and Cameron, Fiedrowicz argues for the necessity of abandoning an understanding of apology in terms of a precise genre, since the pre-Constantinian apologetic literature already mirrored a variety of different addressees, themes, as well as genres. There existed the 'classic' apologies like Aristides, Justin, Athenagoras, Apollinaris, Melito, and Tertullian. There were the so-called speeches or addresses *To the Greeks*, the *logoi pros hellēnas*, like Miltiades, Justin, Tatian, the Pseudo-Justine *Cohortatio ad Graecos* and the *Oratio ad Graecos*.[7] Furthermore, there was Hermias' ridiculing satire, the now only fragmentarily known *Derision of a Pagan Philosopher* or the *Irrisio*. Additionally, there were 'letters' like the alleged *Letter to Diognetus*, Theophilus' *To Autolycus*, Tertullian's *To Scapula*, and Cyprian's *To Demetrianus*. Apologetic also existed in the form of dialogue like the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix. Finally, apologetic writings appeared in the form of polemics both against pagan religion altogether like Arnobius' *Against the Nations*, and against particular exponents of paganism like Origen's *Contra Celsum*.[8]

For Fiedrowicz the multiplicity of generic forms precludes a narrow generic definition of the term. He, therefore, aligns himself with the more comprehensive understanding of apologetics - also found in Eusebius - and argues that in the lieu of such a broad notion the term can be maintained as a classification for the previously mentioned writings:

> In Bezug auf 1 Petr 3,15 („seid stets bereit, jedem Rede und Antwort (*apologia*) zu stehen, der von euch einen vernünftigen Grund (*logos*) fordert hinsichtlich der Hoffnung, die euch erfüllt") verstand er [scil. Eusebius] sämtliche Schriften, die in irgendeiner Weise christliche Glaubensinhalte argumentativ

[7] The speeches *To the Greeks* of Miltiades and Justin have been lost. See the reference to them in Eusebius, h.e. 5.17,5 and 4.18,3f.

[8] This whole sample of writings to different degrees related to the genre of apologetic is given by M. Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum. Die Kontroverse um den christlichen Wahrheitsanspruch in den ersten Jahrhunderten*, Paderborn ²2001, 21f.

verteidigten und bezeugten, als Erfüllung jener apostolischen Weisung, das heißt als eine Form von „Apologie".[9]

A similar comprehensive understanding of the concept appears in the introduction to the previously mentioned anthology, *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians*. Edwards, Goodman, Price and Rowland argue in favour of a working definition, whereby the category is conceived of as "the defence of a cause or party supposed to be of paramount importance to the speaker. It may include *apologia* in the sense of Plato's *Apology*, the defence of a single person."[10] Simultaneously, the authors are keen to emphasise that their understanding of apologetics does not entail polemic, since - contrary to apologetics - polemic does not need to assume a previous attack by an opponent. Apologetics is also to be distinguished from merely epideictic or occasional orations.

Be that as it may, I shall nevertheless venture to sail against the contemporary scholarly current of an exclusive interpretation of apologetic in terms of a broad concept that precludes a generic understanding. First, I shall raise the question whether we have been too quick to give up the idea of *apologia* as a distinct genre. Secondly, I shall examine the concomitant problem: how much is lost if we abandon a conception of apology as a generic term.

2. The Range of Apologetics - from Genre to Mode of Thinking

As previously stated, I shall be the first to acknowledge the obvious attraction of the predominant understanding of current scholarship that the writings traditionally classified as apologetics do not embody a distinct genre. The allegedly similar works prove to be remarkably diverse. They differ in apparent purpose, modes of em-

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[9] Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 21. For the criteria underlying Eusebius' classification, see particularly J.-C. Fredouille, *L'apologetique chrétienne antique. Naissance d'un genre littéraire*, in: REAug 38 (1992), 219-234 (227-230), in which he also discusses the criteriological basis underlying Lactantius' and Jerome's attribution of particular works to the genre of apologetics.

[10] M. Edwards / M. Goodman / S. Price / C. Rowland, *Introduction*, in: Edwards et al. (eds.), 1999, 1-13 (1).

bellishment, in explicit audience, and in the demands they place on their readers.

Over the years, however, I have become increasingly convinced of the value of operating with a heuristic notion of apologetics that also encompasses an understanding of apology as a distinct and definite literary genre, that is, on the assumption that we shall be able to define the genre proper. Moreover, I have come to think that the conception of the term as a generic category is theoretically indispensable in order to endorse the more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. I find it theoretically unsatisfactory to speak of apologetics as a mode of writing or as a particular textual strategy if we are not capable of defining the genre proper - be it from an *emic* and / or *etic* perspective. My basic contention is that we should attempt to conceive of the specific, that is, apologetics as a distinct genre, in terms of the more general, that is, apologetics both as a mode of writing that may embrace a wide spectrum of different genres and as an intrinsic element of communication altogether, and vice-versa.

In the previously mentioned review article by Cameron, she encourages future scholarship on apologetics to pursue two general questions. The first is concerned with the diffusion of apologetic argument and technique across a wide spectrum of different texts. The second pertains to the question whether, and if so why, there is a chronological and / or geographical development in type and argument. Cameron further contends that a more viable approach to apologetics would even be "to detach the term from its chronological associations and to see it as a response to a situation of competition which did not cease with Constantine."[11] I concur with this view, since I am also interested in extending the term to include Christian writings beyond the pre-Constantinian era as well as Jewish and Greco-Roman works of both early and late antiquity; but I do not see why such an understanding necessarily excludes a generic conception of the term. In fact, I think that Cameron comes close to such a perception, when she talks about "a chronological and / or geographical development in type and argument". It may well be that Cameron prefers type for genre, since she understands

[11] Cameron, 2002, 222.

it to be a less rigid and, therefore, more fluid term, but from my perspective such a conception depends on a markedly narrow and misleadingly static understanding of genre.

I believe it is incumbent upon us to develop a typology of apologetics by which we can distinguish between different forms and grades of the phenomenon. I realise that some scholars may object to this endeavour by arguing that such an approach entails an excessively vague and all-encompassing understanding of the issue that threatens to make the term useless as a scholarly category. In other words, if apologetic can designate a wide spectrum of different phenomena embracing a broad scale that reaches - at the most general level - from apologetics as a mode of thinking to apologetics as a distinct genre - at the most specific level -, is there, in fact, anything that evades inclusion into the category?

From my point of view, apologetics may well be such a general feature that involves a variety of different forms and modes. The range of these embodies both 'strong' and 'weak' occurrences of the phenomenon. In fact, it can be argued that an apologetic element is involved in almost every form of communication in the sense that an inherent aspect of human interaction - even in the most trivial daily exchanges - reflects a constant attempt to protect and to defend one's own interests as part of the continual forging of an own identity. In this manner, apologetics is not only directed towards others. It is simultaneously aimed at one's self as an intrinsic part of one's own attempt to sustain and to create an own identity. In order to defend one's self against criticism of the outside world, one must be tarred by the same brush. There would be no need for self-protection against criticism or accusations, were it not for the fact that to different degrees they have made an impact on one's self. In other words, accusations and criticism raised by outsiders may not only correlate with, but also provoke internal scruples.

Philo's use of allegory, for instance, is partly provoked by the accusations made in contemporary Alexandrian elite segments against rude and simple religious conceptions. At the same time, it can be seen - at a more general level - as a reaction against those forms of criticism of myth that notably the Stoic philosophical tradition applied to Hesiod and the Homeric writings. Simultaneously, Philo's insistence on the correlation between the literal and the alle-

gorical level of meaning of the Torah (see, particularly, Migr. §§89-93) is provoked by rivalling interpretations within Judaism itself. Had it not been for this criticism and the competing interpretations of the Torah, there would have been no need for Philo to engage in an impressive apologetic endeavour to document how the Jewish Bible not only complies with particular ideals of the Hellenistic philosophical tradition, but also how it supersedes them. By saying this, I do not entail that Philo necessarily perceived his employment of allegory in terms of apologetics. In fact, I think that he did not. My point is only to underscore - from an *etic* perspective - the apologetic element reflected by the use of allegory.

Similarly, it has during recent years of scholarship on early Christian apologetics been repeatedly emphasised that despite their alleged external orientation - by virtue of the explicit addressee directed towards the outside world - the writings might have had a predominantly Christian audience in view. On the surface addressed to the 'pagan' world, the implied readership as well as the actual audience was of a predominantly Christian nature. The compositions served for the most part to sustain a particular Christian world-view.

A similar interpretative shift has taken place in the study of Jewish apologetics in the wake of Tcherikover's epoch-making article on Jewish apologetics from 1956.[12] Comparable to the change in emphasis in the study of Christian apologetics, most scholars of Jewish apologetic literature now underscore the primarily Jewish audience of this body of writings. A work like the *Letter of Aristeas*, for instance, may as part of its rhetorical staging make use of an explicit external addressee, but it is not very likely that this panegyric of Judaism ever succeeded in achieving a wide 'pagan' audience. Nor is it evident that the main target of the author was to reach a non-Jewish public. It is characteristic for the writings traditionally classified as Jewish apologetics - as it has been concisely formulated by John Collins - that: "Moreover, virtually all of this literature is engaged in an apologetic enterprise, to justify the rationality and even

[12] V.A. Tcherikover, *Jewish Apologetic Reconsidered*, in: Eos 3 (1956), 169-193.

the superiority of Judaism by Hellenistic canons, for the benefit of the Jews themselves, if not of the Gentiles."[13]

Similar to the example of Philo's use of allegory, however, it is important to modify Collins' claim by adding that the acknowledgement of the apologetic enterprise of these writings is situated at the *etic* level. Neither Artapanus nor Aristobul, for instance, should be classified as apologetic from an *emic* perspective. They did not - as far as we can see on the basis of the existing fragments - perceive their works in terms of apologetics; but that, of course, does not preclude us from perceiving them this way in lieu of a more comprehensive understanding of apologetics.

On the basis of these considerations, it is important to acknowledge that apologetics is not confined to the external persuasion of one's opponents only. It also has an important internal function both at the level of the individual and at the level of the group. In order to convince the external world of the legitimacy or truth of one's world-view (or, more likely, aspects of it), one must also persuade oneself. In order to acknowledge the criticism raised by the external world, the criticism has to develop - to different degrees - through scruples that have to be overcome or accommodated by the previous world-view. In order to pacify or neutralise the posed threat emanating from a contradictory way of perceiving the world, it needs to be cognitively domesticated or coped with in a manner that either enables continuous adherence to the world-view or an adjustment of the world-view.

As already stated, I am aware of the objections to such a comprehensive conception. Some may object that in my understanding apologetics has been excessively stretched to be meaningful. If we decide, however, to confine the category exclusively to designate the explicit "defence of a cause or party supposed to be of paramount importance to the speaker",[14] we shall have to leave out a number

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[13] J.J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem. Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, The Biblical Resource Series, Grand Rapids 2000, 271f.

[14] Edwards et al., 1999, 1. Cf. the definition of "apologetic" by K. Berger, *Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament*, in: ANRW 2.25,2 (1984), 1031-1432.1831-1885 (1287), as "jede Selbstrechtfertigung und Selbstdarstellung angesichts von Gegnern und Bestreitung."

of works traditionally classified as apologetic. It may, of course, be beneficial with such an occasional scholarly reorganisation, but the expenses paid are - from my perspective - detrimental to a full perception of the complexities and the range of the phenomenon.

A number of Jewish Diaspora works of the late Second Temple Period, for instance, are only apologetic to the extent that they represent a response to a perceived challenge of an out-group. They are engaged in what Carl Holladay has appropriately termed "both an excercise in ethnic promotion as well as ethnic self-preservation."[15] It would be extremely difficult to see an apologetic dimension in these texts, if we were to adhere to a narrow definition of the term, but yet there is a good point in also including such compositions into the category. After all, there is no need for ethnic self-preservation and promotion if one does not to a greater or lesser extent feel that one's own culture or - more likely - crucial aspects of it are intimidated by perceived external cultural threats. We definitely do not have to look to the ancient world in order to acknowledge the importance of this aspect. One may just observe the contemporary social situation of Denmark, in which large segments - belonging to the cultural and religious majority tradition - feel themselves intimidated by what they perceive to be dangerous cultural and religious traditions of a minority group.

By saying this, I want to pay heed to a point persuasively made by Erich Gruen with regard to classical scholarship on Jewish apologetics, but I think it also has a bearing on the study of Christian apologetics. Gruen criticises the extent to which much traditional scholarship on Jewish apologetics has been tempted to interpret Jewish Diaspora life as a constant and essential defence against the dangers of foreign cultural influences. An influential trajectory of scholarship has studied Diaspora Judaism in terms of a self-defensive alertness to the alleged surrounding Hellenistic culture. Moriz Friedländer formulated this understanding classically and concisely in his important work on Jewish apologetics. He contended that: "Eine Geschichte der

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[15] C.R. Holladay, *Jewish Responses to Hellenistic Culture in Early Ptolemaic Egypt*, in: P. Bilde / T. Engberg-Pedersen / L. Hannestad / J. Zahle (eds.), *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt*, SHC 3, Aarhus 1992, 139-163 (144).

jüdischen Apologetik ist aber eine Geschichte des Judenthums."[16] A similar point is made in the contemporary *History of the Jewish People* by Schürer, in which he argues that: "Das hellenistische Judenthum befand sich also im fortwährenden Kriegszustand mit der übrigen hellenistischen Welt; es hatte stets das Schwert zur Vertheidigung zu führen. Ein grosser Theil der gesamten hellenistisch-jüdischen Literatur dient daher apologetischen Zwecken."[17]

Gruen is correct in opposing such an essentialised picture of Diaspora Judaism existence, but he overstates his case by not acknowledging that even if "the surviving products do not present a struggle for identity in an alien world, an apologia for strange customs and beliefs, or propaganda meant to persuade the Gentile", they may still reflect an apologetic element.

Gruen might be right in his contention that: "the texts instead display a positive quality, bold and inventive, sometimes startling, often light-hearted and engaging, and throughout directed internally to Jews conversant with or altogether inseparable from the culture of the Greeks."[18] But that does not exclude an apologetic element in the comprehensive sense of the term as a reaction to perceived challenges or threats posed by other cultural traditions. Gruen's concern to avoid a cultural essentialism that portrays Diaspora Judaism in terms of a continual self-defence notwithstanding, he overlooks the fact that the minority culture may also be a threat to the majority culture. As suggested by my reference to contemporary Denmark, it is not necessarily the case that the minority culture is bound to be self-defensive. The same applies to the majority culture, if segments of that culture feel intimidated by the minority culture - a relevant observation with regard to the existence of the *Adversus Iudaios*-literature. Additionally, Gruen exclusively

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[16] M. Friedländer, *Geschichte der jüdischen Apologetik als Vorgeschichte des Christentums. Eine historisch-kritische Darstellung der Propaganda und Apologie im Alten Testament und in der hellenistischen Diaspora mit Anmerkungen, Nachweisen und zahlreichen Textauszügen*, Amsterdam 1973 (1903), 2.

[17] E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi. Dritter Band. Das Judentum in der Zerstreuung und die jüdische Literatur*, Leipzig 1898, 397.

[18] E.S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism. The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, Hellenistic Culture and Society 30, Berkeley 1998, 292f.

focuses on the appropriateness of employing the term apologetics from an *emic* perspective, but he ignores the fact that the category may also be theoretically valuable from an *etic* perspective.

If, in fact, we disregard these broader aspects of apologetics, we shall not be able to see the range of the phenomenon. On the basis of these assumptions, we may parenthetically note that the decision of Edwards, Goodman, Price, and Rowland to exclude polemics from the definition of apologetics may also skew a full understanding of the phenomenon. The more so, since polemics and apologetics seem so interconnected in the texts under discussion that they should be seen perhaps not as two different sides of the same coin, but at least to be intrinsically interrelated. Polemics, in fact, often appear as an aggressive form of self-defence, since it entails a reaction to either actual or perceived threats and / or criticism. This is all the more evident if one takes a look at the development of apologetics subsequent to the Constantinian turn. In the post-Constantinian period, *contra gentes*-compositions were increasingly included in the apologetic genre.[19]

Discussing Jewish apologetics, John Barclay has justly argued that apart from a narrow understanding of the term conceived of as purely defensive, its meaning might be stretched also to cover a "discourse whose response to the challenge of outsider is primarily encomiastic and only remotely or secondarily defensive in tone or form", and a "discourse whose internal address nonetheless has an outside audience as its indirect target."[20] This is an important observation also for the study of Christian apologetic writings. If we restrict the range of the term to encompass only compositions of a purely defensive nature, we shall, for instance, have to exclude a work like the alleged *Letter to Diognetus* from the category.

Bearing this broad range of apologetics in mind, I shall now turn to the other end of the spectrum, that is, the narrow generic definition of the term. I shall ask to what extent a narrow understanding of the category as purely defensive may be related to the existence of a distinct genre. I shall pursue the argument by first theoreti-

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[19] Cf. Fredouille 1995, 206-209.211-213.

[20] J.M.G. Barclay, *Apologetics in the Jewish Diaspora*, in: J.R. Bartlett (ed.), *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*, London 2002, 129-148 (135).

cally discussing the indispensability of a perception of apologetic in terms of genre. My basic contention is that the recent scholarly dismissal of the existence of such a genre is based on a misleadingly narrow and static understanding of genre. Secondly, I shall raise the question to what extent a definition can be reached from an *emic* perspective.

3. The Question of Genre from a Genre Theoretical Perspective

Some might object to the interest in the generic question as an expression of a neo-Aristotelian quest for neat categorisations, but I believe that genre theory may help us to develop a refined understanding of apologetics. It may contribute to both clarifying the relationship between the *emic* and the *etic* levels of analysis as well as elucidating the differentiations between various occurrences of the phenomenon at the *emic* level itself.

Notably Alastair Fowler has underscored that genre theory is not so much a matter of definitional and classificatory issues as it is concerned with communication and interpretation. We classify in order to achieve a better interpretation: "When we try to decide the genre of a work, then, our aim is to discover its meaning."[21]

In an article on the origin of genres, Tzvetan Todorov persuasively endorses the view that there never was a literature without genres.[22] He is primarily concerned with modern literature of which it has been said that the fluidity or even the lack of genres is one of its prime characteristics. Contrary to this view, Todorov documents that even modern literature is permeated both by the adhesion to particular genre expectations and the compliance with particular norms pertaining to form. Needless to say, his observation is the more important with regard to ancient literature by virtue of its stronger determination by generic conventions. Even if the genres were not socially acknowledged in the sense that they were made the object of a meta-theoretical discourse, authors always composed their works functionally dependent on an already existing system

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[21] A. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature. An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes*, Oxford 1982, 38.

[22] T. Todorov, *The Origin of Genres*, in: New Literary History 8 (1976), 159-170 (161).

of genres they to a different degree of artistic skill could develop and transform in different directions.

Texts are neither with regard to content nor form created *ex nihilo*. They are woven together by different threads and are part of a larger cultural and social tapestry. They depend on other writings and textual forms, which they simultaneously challenge, develop, and are decisively influenced by. The same applies to genre. The occurrence of a new genre is always a transformation of one or several generic predecessors.[23] On the basis of this understanding, it lies near at hand to define genre in terms of the number of properties pertaining to both content and to form that a given group of writings to a greater or lesser extent share and by which they differ from other types of texts. Such a perception is at the back of the understanding of Karlyn Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson. They argue that: "if the recurrence of similar forms establishes a genre, then genres are groups of discourses which share substantive, stylistic and situational characteristics." Some of these characteristics may, of course, also be found in other text types, but the point made by Campbell and Jamieson is that "a genre is a group of acts unified by a constellation of forms that recurs in each of its members. These forms, *in isolation*, appear in other discourses. What is distinctive about the acts in a genre is the recurrence of the forms *together* in constellation."[24]

Similarly, Todorov emphasises the recurrence of certain discursive properties as constitutive for the understanding of genre. According to him a genre is the institutionalisation of such discursive properties by a given society: "Individual texts are produced and perceived in relation to the norm constituted by this codification. A genre, literary or otherwise, is nothing but this codification of discursive properties."[25] Despite the obvious appeal of such a perception, it incurs the risk of exaggerating the stability of genres and thus to underestimate the continual generic development. The strength

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[23] Todorov, 1976, 161.

[24] K.K. Campbell / K.H. Jamieson, *Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism. An Introduction*, in: K.K. Campbell / K.H. Jamieson (eds.), *Form and Genre. Shaping Rhetorical Action*, Speech Communication Association, Falls Church 1978, 9-32 (20f.).

[25] Todorov, 1976, 162.

of the position is its acknowledgement of generic uniformity, but it fails to appreciate the continual generic modulations. Individual texts do not only conform to specific genres, they also - by virtue of their uniqueness - affect the genre they aim to comply with. Genres are a matrix for the generation of new works that simultaneously continue to develop and to transform their generic antecedents. Their relative stability notwithstanding, genres continually undergo development, a point that has persistently been made by Fowler. He promulgates the view that:

> Every literary work changes the genres it relates to. This is true not only of radical innovations and productions of genius. The most imitative work, even as it kowtows slavishly to generic conventions, nevertheless affects them, if only minutely or indirectly [...] At present we need only notice that literary meaning necessarily involves modulations or departures from generic codes, and therefore, eventually alterations of them. However a work relates to existing genres - by conformity, variation, innovation, or antagonism - it will tend, if it becomes known, to bring about new states of these genres.[26]

I am to a great extent indebted to Fowler's understanding, since it enables us simultaneously to take the continuous generic modulations and developments seriously and to account for the relative uniformity or stability of a given genre. If genres are in a continual state of transmutation, it is reasonable to question the widespread assumption of current scholarship on apologetics that no generic definition of the term can be given, since the individual writings are so remarkably diverse. If, in fact, it is a token of generic development that "a work must modulate or vary or depart from its generic conventions, and consequently alter them for the future," the diversity of the writings under discussion does not necessarily preclude a shared generic classification.[27] If the variations reflected by the works are not a valid objection to a generic classification, some may

[26] Fowler, 1982, 23.

[27] Fowler, 1982, 23.

want to point to the fact - also emphasised by Fiedrowicz - that Christian apologetic writings, for instance, embody a wide array of genres. But neither does this observation rule out the possibility of a shared generic classification, since membership of one genre does not exclude membership of others. Additionally, we may already at this point anticipate the latter discussion. It is very conceivable that we are dealing with a wide spectrum of compositions, whereby some reflect the genre proper - however we define it - others exploit the genre in terms of a mode of expression, and others again include the genre in terms of a sub-genre integrated into another generic composition.

This suggestion leads us to another important aspect of Fowler's theory of genre. Fowler has developed a tripartite generic typology that I find illuminating for the understanding of apologetics. In the nomenclature of Fowler, he distinguishes between *kind* or *historical genre, subgenre,* and *mode.*[28] In this manner, we can speak of writings that are apologetic in terms of mode, although they embody another genre. The compositions subsumed by Gregory Sterling under the rubric of apologetic historiography may be such texts that reflect an apologetic mode of writing, in spite of the fact that they belong to the genre of historiography proper.[29] It may also be that the Eusebian distinction between apologies proper and apologetic writings, in fact, correlates with such a differentiation between genre and mode.

Similarly, we can find writings that are of an entirely different genre, but nevertheless contain sections representing the subgenre of apology - the excursus on the law in the *Letter of Aristeas* (§128-171) may be a possible example of this phenomenon, just as Philo's attack on the so-called radical allegorisers in *De Migratione Abrahami* may be another. Finally, and most importantly, we shall be able to group together a number of mutually different works into the genre of apology proper. An important point in Fowler's argument is that the three categories are interconnected by their generic repertoire. Therefore, we cannot speak of an apologetic mode of writing with-

[28] Fowler, 1982, 56. In this context I shall leave out of question Fowler's fourth category "constructional types", since it is situated at another level.

[29] G.E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition. Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography,* NT.S 64, Leiden 1992, 17.

out necessarily implying the existence of an apologetic genre, too. Whereas the subgenre adds features to the genre, the mode selects or abstract from the genre proper. In the first case we find a generic addition, whereas in the latter we find a generic subtraction. The subgenre according to Fowler embodies the same external characteristics as those found in the genre, together with an additional specification of content. To this it adds "an obligatory part-repertoire of substantive rules, optional in kind (to which it is related, therefore, almost as a sub-class)." Mode, on the other hand, "has few if any external rules, but evokes a historical kind through samples of its internal repertoire."[30] Precisely, what I previously hinted at by defining genre in terms of a number of shared discursive properties both with regard to content and to form.

Since Fowler is well aware of the elusive character of genres, that is, that they are in a continual state of transmutation, he employs the Wittgensteinian concept of family resemblance to capture their connecting features: "Representatives of a genre may then be regarded as making up a family whose septs and individual members are related in various ways, without necessarily having any single feature shared in common by all."[31] There is, however, a certain vagueness adhering to this idea of family resemblance, since it is not altogether clear what the constitutive elements of the various ways in which the septs and individuals members relate are. To specify their nature, Fowler points to literary tradition as the basis of family resemblance. It embraces both a sequence of influence and imitation as well as inherited codes that connect works in the genre. An obvious example in the context of the study of apologetics may be the clusters of motifs shared by both Jewish as well as Christian apologetic writings such as the criticism of idolatry, the proof of age, the proof of a superior ethos, and the argument of an alleged Hellenic theft.

Since genre's nature is to alter over time, we shall not be surprised to see various historical states to be very different from one another.[32] At the same time, we shall abstain from providing an analytic definition of the genre of apology, since it will only give us a

[30] Fowler, 1982, 56.

[31] Fowler, 1982, 41.

[32] Fowler, 1982, 46.

static picture of the genre at a given historical moment and in a particular geographical setting. What we can do, however, is to pursue the generic repertoire of the genre and on this basis attempt to encircle the contours of it. I realise that some may oppose such an approach by arguing that if the genre cannot be properly analytically defined, then there hardly was a genre. But given genre's nature such an objection seems to miss the point.

With these theoretical considerations in mind that taken together have pointed to the importance of maintaining an understanding of apologetics in terms of genre, we shall now turn to the *emic* level of analysis and raise the question to what extent an apologetic genre existed, and what the generic features of this genre were.

4. The Existence of an Apologetic Genre from an *Emic* Perspective

Although we have only a paucity of evidence in the rhetorical and epistolary handbooks, there is enough to substantiate the existence of an apologetic genre from the end of the fifth century BCE and onwards. The terms *apologia* as well as the corresponding verb *apologeisthai* appear for the first time in the orations of Antiphon of Rhamnus (480-411 B.C.E.), who wrote speeches in defence of persons being accused. It may well be that Aristotle's lost work *Sunagōgē Technōn* covered the subject of forensic oratory and its proper disposition more extensively than its treatment in his *Rhetoric*, but here, too, we find references to apologetics both as the counterpart of charges made in forensic speech and as a particular type of the forensic genre (1.3,3; 1.10,1). Similarly, in the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* - presumably written by Anaximenes - apologetic is emphasised as a distinct genre connected with forensic practice. It is defined as "the refutation of errors and offences of which particular persons have been charged or suspected" (1426b, 27-29). Anaximenes further comments on the apologetic genre by adding that it comprises three methods. A defendant must either prove his innocence with regard to the things he is charged with; or - if forced to admit them - he must try to show that his acting or behaviour was in compliance with the law, justice, nobleness, and to the benefit of the public; or if he cannot prove this, he must attempt to gain forgiveness by representing his acts as an error or misfortune, and by showing that only small mischief resulted from them (1427a, 25-30). In the subsequent historical development, forensic oratory played a predominant role. The handbooks

of Hermagoras, Cicero, Quintilian, and the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* were mostly concerned with forensic rhetoric. In all these different writings apologetics were intimately related to the forensic genre. It designated those forms of judicial speech, in which an orator spoke in defence of a case brought before a court responsible for ruling on matters belonging to the past.

In addition to the information gained from the rhetorical handbooks, a number of apologetic speeches have been preserved. They give us an impression of the range of apologetics as well as concrete examples of how defensive speeches were held in court. One of the most prominent and peculiar examples of the genre is, of course, the extensive literature occasioned by the court case brought against Socrates. Several authors engaged themselves in apologetic writings on behalf of Socrates. Apart from the well known Apologies of Plato and Xenophon, works on the same subject are known to have been composed by Lysias, Theodectes, Demetrius of Phaleron, Zeon of Sidon, Plutarch, Theo of Antioch, and Libanius.[33] Thus there is abundant evidence to underscore the pervasiveness of the genre from the end of the fifth century and onwards.

In addition to apologetic oratory as a specific type of the forensic genre, we know from Pseudo-Demetrius' *On Epistolary Types* (first century BCE or CE) that apologetic also occurred in the context of letters - a point of interest with regard to 2 Corinthians.[34] Pseudo-Demetrius speaks of the apologetic letter and defines it as that "which adduces, with proof, arguments which contradict charges that are being made."[35] The constituent element is once again the repudiation of charges raised. It is, therefore, reasonable to see this form of the apologetic letter as predominantly shaped by the forensic tradition. It has been obvious for scholarship to examine this tradition in order to find the background for the later Jewish and Christian apologetic writings. After all, it is fairly evident to emphasise the forensic tradi-

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[33] G.A. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*, Princeton 1963, 149.

[34] See now the extensive monograph by F.J. Long, *Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's Apology. The Compositional Unity of 2 Corinthians*, SNTSMS 131, Cambridge 2004, who argues for an understanding of 2 Corinthians as a coherent letter that should be classified as belonging to the genre of apologetic letters.

[35] A.J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, SBL.SBibSt 19, Atlanta 1988, 40f.

tion with regard to those Christian works, which - fictitiously or not - have been addressed to the emperor in his role as judge, since they are rhetorically situated in a court setting. On the other hand, it may not be as patent as it has often been thought to examine this tradition as the generic antecedent for the later Jewish and Christian compositions. It is certainly not all works traditionally classified as apologetic that rhetorically employ the court setting. And those that do are strictly speaking not forensic speeches in the sense of being reproductions of actual speeches held before a panel of judges.[36] In this manner, the later works are more like the *Apology* of Plato that employs the forensic setting, but present a philosophical argument in favour of a particular world-view.[37] The extension of the genre - mirrored by Plato's *Apology* - to include writings that employ a court setting without necessarily being actual court speeches is valuable for an appraisal of the subsequent Jewish and Christian tradition, but it can not account for the protreptic elements of the later tradition. As obvious as the examination of forensic speech as background for the later tradition has been, there has been a tendency to overlook the importance of the equally influential tradition of apologetics in the context of deliberative rhetoric.

In a monograph on the *Letters of Demosthenes*, Jonathan Goldstein points to the importance of the apologetic *demegoria*. He argues that a work can only be called an apology "provided its content throughout aims at presenting a defense in answer to accusations against a certain person or group of persons or at overcoming or preventing opinions adverse to them."[38] Contrary to forensic apology, the apologetic *demegoria* is directed towards the assembly or the council and not a panel of judges in court. Whereas forensic speech is primarily concerned with the past, one party accusing, the other defending itself with regard to things done in the past, the demegoric speech is focused on the future. It is concerned with the future course of the audience it is

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[36] See the extensive study by F. Veltman, *The Defense Speeches of Paul in Acts. Gattungsforschung and Its Limitations*, Berkeley 1975, which unfortunately is only available in a facsimile copy printed by microfilm / xerography. In the dissertation Veltman devotes an entire chapter (72-168) to the defence speech in ancient historiography and discusses the extent to which it is a reproduction of actually held speeches.

[37] Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 19.

[38] J.A. Goldstein, *The Letters of Demosthenes*, New York 1968, 98.

addressed to persuade. Contrary to forensic speech which according to Goldstein takes "as its basis the existence of a law which ordains punishment or redress if certain things have been done in the past", the demegoric speech is predominantly concerned with expediency and the future course of its audience.[39] Numerous apologetic *demegoriae* by Demosthenes, Isocrates, Aeschines, and others have been preserved, which document how apologetic elements can be used both in the context of propaganda and self-apology. Although forensic features were instrumental to the formation of the apologetic *demegoria,*[40] it represents - similar to Plato's *Apology* - an extension of the apologetic genre. An extension that can account for the fact that not only do we find salient protreptic elements in the later Jewish and Christian apologetic writings, but also that the works, which are not of a strictly forensic nature, could still be classified as apologetic writings, even from a generic point of view. Thus, it may prove valuable for future studies on Jewish and Christian apologetics not only to take the forensic form of apologetics into consideration, but also to pay attention to apologetics in the context of the deliberative genre.

5. Conclusion - Establishing a Typology for Apologetics

I have provided theoretical as well as empirical reasons for maintaining - together with a more comprehensive understanding of apologetics - the notion of apology as a distinct genre. I have also tried to differentiate between different occurrences of apologetics at the *emic* level. It is obvious to distinguish between apologetics as a mode of writing, a kind or historical genre, and a sub-genre, and to assume that an ancient culturally educated audience was - if not necessarily aware of the finer nuances between the different gradations pertaining to each of these categories -, then at least able to acknowledge particular writings and / or passages of writings as belonging to the general category of apologetics. It may also be that some of the compositions that we subsequent to Eusebius categorise as apologies, were not, in fact, acknowledged as such by their authors. This, however, does not exclude the inclusion of these works into the genre proper as long as we recognise that the genre designation is not lo-

[39] Goldstein, 1968, 104.

[40] See Long, 2004, 102.

cated at the *emic* level in so far as the nomenclature *apologia* was not acknowledged by the authors. As Jean-Claude Fredouille succinctly has pointed out, however, a genre can exist even without a term.[41]

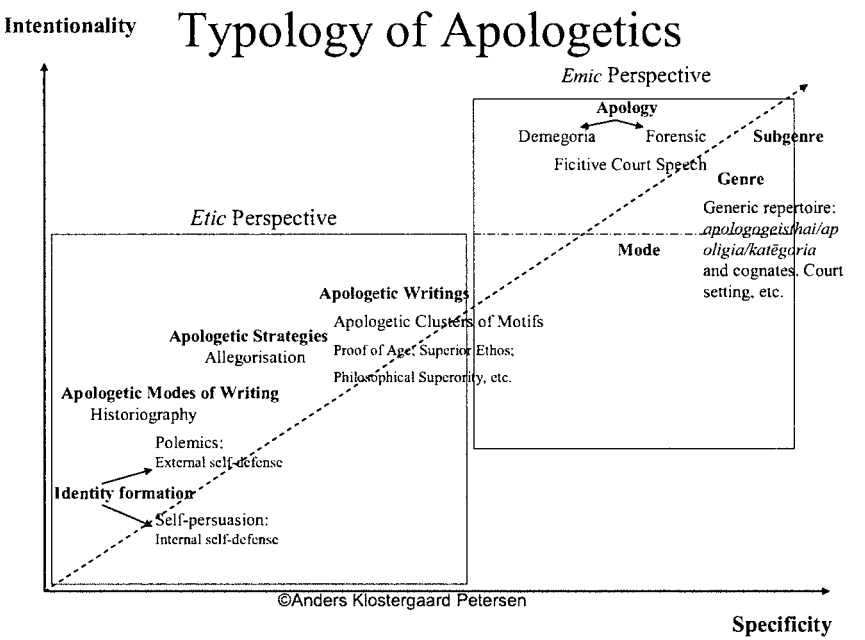
Within the genre proper, we can distinguish between two generic trajectories characterised by a slightly different generic repertoire. We find apologies both in the context of the forensic and the deliberative genre. Although the two originally distinct forms of apologetic eventually merge, we are on this basis able to account for protreptic elements in the subsequent tradition of Jewish and Christian apologetics without necessarily presuming them to be at odds with the previous apologetic tradition. Once again, it needs to be underscored that a given genre is not a monolithic, homogeneous entity that is exempt from undergoing perpetual generic modulations and transformations. Genres undergo perennial changes in the course of historical development.

If we move from the *emic* to the *etic* level of analysis, that which is apologetic can be extended to cover a broader range of the phenomenon. Thus, we can categorise particular writings as apologetic, if there are substantial thematic overlaps between them. Additionally, apologetic elements pertaining to the use of allegorisation, for instance, can be detected. In this manner, we may speak of compositions that use apologetic strategies. At the same time, it is obvious that the category cannot be confined to the externally directed defence against charges or criticism raised by the outside world. It is also part of a self-persuasion. In order to be troubled by doubts caused by external charges or criticism one must - to some degree - be tarred by the same brush. In fact, apologetics may reasonably be stretched to designate an intrinsic element in the continual forging of

[41] Fredouille, 1992, 234: "Pour autant, l'absence de denomination générique n'empêche pas un genre d'exister, de se developer, de s'adapter (Après tout, nous l'avons dit, le roman antique a connu les memes diffcultés d'identification). Et avec son polymorphisme et son abondante production (une certaine d'œuvres, de la *Praedicatio Petri* au *De correctione rusticourm* par de Martin de Braga, mais beaucoup ne sont plus pour nous que des titres), l'apologétique antique a marquee profondément la literature chrétienne et l'histoire du christianisme, au prix de differenciations internes, révélant l'adaptibilité et la plasticité de ce genre innommé — *a genre without a term.*"

identity - both at the level of the individual and that of the group. To adhere to a particular world-view with a concomitant codex for behaviour, one must continually defend oneself against threats posed by the existence of rivalling or contradictory ways of world-making and behaviours. The rivalling world-views (or aspects of them) have to be cognitively domesticated or coped with by being integrated into one's own world-view - whether positively or negatively.

This may - to the scholarly taste of some - be an excessive broadening of the concept, but the advantage of such a typological understanding that ranges from the very specific to the extremely general is that it allows us to see the wide range of the phenomenon under scrutiny, and that it enables us - within an explicit theoretical framework - to differentiate between different manifestations and gradations of apologetics.[42] Simultaneously, it allows us to include comparable phenomena from other periods and other geographical settings than the ones focused on in this essay and covered by the volume.



[42] I have attempted figuratively to reproduce the basic argument of the article in the graph printed at the end of the essay.

Jews, Christians and 'Pagans' in Conflict

Judith M. Lieu

> "Polycarp has acknowledged three times that he is a Christian." When the herald said this, the whole mass of gentiles and Jews living in Smyrna cried out in unrestrained rage and with a great shout, "This is the teacher of Asia,[1] the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods" (Mart.Polyc. 12.2).

This iconic scene captures how many would exegete the title of this essay. It would be easy to enrich it by similar snapshots from a multitude of other early, 'contemporary', writers, and it has inspired centuries of popular piety and art. Authentic Christian confession, according to this perception, is inseparable from conflict; Jews assail the Christian to one side, 'pagans' to the other. Justin Martyr charges Trypho, "You in your synagogues curse all those who have become Christians from him, while the rest of the gentiles make the curse active destroying those who only confess themselves to be Christians."[2] Few now, however, would let that scene remain the object only of unquestioning admiration. A seasoned observer would now be quick to point out that that multitude of contemporary witnesses just mentioned all share the same perspective, that of the Christians independent Jewish or 'pagan' accounts are rare. Others would question whether Jews would indeed join a cry against "the destroyer of our gods". Indeed the scene recalls an earlier, equally stylised one, namely that described by the author of 2 Maccabees where the youngest of seven brothers dies appealing to God "to make you confess that he alone is God", and so drives the watching King to a similar violent rage.[3] The interdependence between

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[1] The Greek manuscripts other than M (Mosquensis) read "of impiety".

[2] Just., dial. 96.2.

[3] 2Macc. 7:37-40.

Jewish and Christian martyr-narratives in themes, language and staging is evident even if not straightforward.[4]

Yet, even when such historical- and tradition-critical analysis is done, any such scepticism leaves intact the fundamental structures of the relationships depicted: the interaction between Jews, Christians, and 'pagans' is defined by conflict. This definition is not, of course, confined to the accounts of the martyrs, and to reflect on its power both its pervasive presence and its deeply rooted origins need to be acknowledged. These roots lie embedded within the scriptural heritage which itself is shaped by its own recurring theme of conflict: the enslaved people of Israel oppressed by the Egyptians, but witnessing their decisive routing on the shores of the divided sea; the Canaanites, driven out and defeated in the occupation of the land by the people of Israel, and yet for ever threatening to overcome their conquerors, demanding the ruthless and uncompromising intervention of an Elijah on Mt. Carmel; or, moving forward, the Maccabees, archetypal martyrs for their faith in the face of an enemy who is determined to carry out ideological annihilation, and then later emerging as archetypal victors, systematically destroying the godless forces who had attempted to wipe them out.

The drama of conflict is continually replayed, reinforcing its seminality. The opponents of the Maccabees are labelled "foreigners", *allophyloi*, the Septuagint's label for the Philistines, Israel's historic foe;[5] the soon-to-be-martyred Perpetua fights triumphantly against an Egyptian, the recurring symbol of the enemy of the chosen people, and of the 'flesh-pots' they so easily lusted after; Babylon becomes Rome just as, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the *Kittim* can continuously reinvent themselves; the prophets' denunciation of those who adopted the ways of the Canaanites is directed anew by Christians against their real or envisioned Jewish competitors. Not only the cycle of conflict but even its protagonists are, through an act of mythopoiesis, fixed in the order of things.

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[4] See J. van Henten, *Zum Einfluss der jüdischen Martyrologien auf die Literatur des frühen Christentums. II Die Apostolischen Väter*, in: ANRW 2.27,1 (1993), 700-723; D. Boyarin, *Dying for God. Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, Stanford 1999.

[5] See J.M. Lieu, *Not Hellenes but Philistines?*, in: JJS 53 (2002), 246-63.

Yet, although destined to be re-run again and again, this is no dualistic universe, and that destined pattern is not the last word. The primal cosmic conflict of origins has been muted in the Genesis narrative by the supremacy of a single creator, and even the eschatological conflict has a confident outcome. More mundane conflict, too, results in victory - Israel settled in her land, Simon celebrated as preserving the Law and sanctuary, driving the gentiles from the country (1Macc. 14), Perpetua wearing the victor's wreath in certain anticipation of that to come. And, pre-eminently, the church, although not yet triumphant, yet systematically overcoming heresy within, as well as 'paganism' and the Jews without - an expectation initiated by the Apologists, several of whom wrote 'against the Jews' and 'against heresy' as well, and fixed in subsequent triumphalist histories of the church.

There are shadows cast over this unblemished tale. One of Horace's Epistles famously described how captured Greece led Rome captive;[6] so, too, the summary account just given may have to allow for the swift submission of the Maccabbeans / Hasmoneans to hellenism, or for the 'rejudaisation' that some have seen in the church of the second century, in so-called 'early catholicism', or for the supposed 'paganisation' of the post-Constantinian church.[7] Even so, this revised account of pyrrhic victories does nothing to mitigate the conflictual definition of Christianity: rather, it reinforces it, prompting vigilance and internal scrutiny. Heresy, or to remain within the limits of the title, Jewishness on the one side or 'paganism' on the other, may be found within, a third column to be identified and exposed in the unending effort to achieve or to regain the victory of the pure. Indeed, this internalisation of conflict is a mark of what will become Christian discourse almost from its origins. The seeds are already sown by Paul, whatever his intentions: "How is it that you, who, although a Jew, lives in gentile fashion and not Jewishly, compels the gentiles to *judaise*?" (Gal 2:14).

Jan Assmann's influential study, *Moses the Egyptian*, traces to 'Mosaic' monotheism the distinction between true and false religion that underlines those pervasive oppositions just described; he ar-

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[6] Hor., ep. 2.1,156f.: *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit.*

[7] These are beleagured representations, not positions supported by this author.

gues that this distinction constructs "a universe that is not only full of meaning, identity, and orientation, but also full of conflict, intolerance and violence".[8] The charge is a familiar one; in the present context it invites a turning of the tables: it is now a familiar argument that the early Christians, in order to establish and secure their own identity, fatefully saw in 'the Jews' the 'Other' against whom they defined themselves. The Jews of the Christian imagination of the early centuries and for long after are the counter-constructions of the construction of the self.[9] While scholars may debate whether these Jews are more made of straw than of flesh and blood, in the longue durée of history they do bleed and die. It is for that reason that it is not, perhaps never will be, time to move on from accounts of that process, but some are beginning to ask whether a similar analysis might be undertaken of the 'pagans' - justified by the name itself, one of derision given by the Christians.

In such a revised account the central place of Christians in the initial tripartite title changes significance, no longer marking the victim but the perpetrator, albeit still in a relationship shaped by conflict. Indeed, the opening excerpt from the account of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* within this framework acquires a new significance: for in that story, as told by a Christian narrator, both Jews and 'pagans' are the tools of the devil, and they are presumably destined for the fire which, unlike that in whose midst Polycarp was placed, will never be quenched: "You threaten me with a fire that burns but for a moment and is soon quenched; but you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgement and of eternal torment kept for the godless" (Mart.Polyc. 11.2). Yet, once again Polycarp belongs to an older tradition:

> You have not yet escaped the judgement of the almighty, all-seeing God. For our brothers after enduring a brief suffering have drunk of ever-flowing life, under God's covenant: but

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[8] J. Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian. The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*, Harvard 1997, 1.

[9] See J.M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Christian World*, Oxford 2004, 286-297; also the critical analysis by M. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity. A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus*, StPB 46, Leiden 1996.

> you, by the judgement of God, will receive just punishment for your arrogance (2Macc. 7:15-16).

The question that Jan Assmann compellingly poses is, then, not whether all identity-formation is accompanied by conflict, at least in its seminal stages, but whether a monotheistic conviction enshrines such conflict in an absolute ideology, inasmuch as it excludes any possibility of what he terms 'techniques of translation'. Yet one of the many virtues of this provocative book is the way that Assmann discovers within the tradition and its continuation the possibility of an alternative 'remembering': "cultural memory is rich in crypts and dark spaces".[10]

It has, of course, in recent years become a commonplace that cultural and sociological theories of conflict offer creative models for exploring the inter-relationship between those groups in late antiquity who are conventionally labelled Jews, Christians, and 'pagans'. As models, however, they should not be used to reify the nature of those relationships, but rather should stimulate new questions. Such stimulus will come both from within the models and their further refinement and application but also from the re-envisaging of the situations for which they are being exploited. In what follows seven areas where such re-envisaging is possible are suggested.

1. A conflict model of social relations conventionally has been contrasted with a consensus model that presupposes a more organic, functionalist view of society. Although consensus models have been used for interpreting the development of the early Christian movement, for example, by Gerd Theissen, conflict has become a more dominant theme in recent study - which may itself be a function of the contemporary context. Applied to the emergence of early Christianity within the Roman empire this means a preference for understanding religious change in terms of revolution rather than in terms of evolution. As already suggested, this is the primary perception encouraged by many of the early Christian sources, but not to the exclusion of other models. As shall be argued, the Apologies arguably suggest an alternative pattern - although it may be no ac-

[10] J. Assmann, 1997, 218.

cident that apologetics is, perhaps, not always highly valued in the contemporary setting.

2. Much has been written in recent years on the emergence of Christian identity. However, the modern study of identity has increasingly moved towards speaking not only of identity as construction but also of multiplicity, of the multiple identities that individuals possess and of the ways in which these are negotiated in practice. By contrast, the language of "Jews, Christians and 'pagans' in conflict" suggests that these are not only static but are also dominant identity markers. This, however, is an assumption that surely needs to be questioned as more is learnt about the social complexity of late antiquity, demanding a more realistic picture of the lives of most people.

3. Here studies of ethnic conflict within a society may have something to offer; in contrast to those who have denied the applicability of the language of 'race', a number of recent studies have successfully explored the development of early Christian self-identity using categories of ethnicity.[11] These approaches recognise that although early Christian rhetoric claimed to transcend the divisions of gender, of social status, and of ethnic origin, the strategies of self-definition employed, at least within their texts, conform, both in the ancient and in contemporary settings, to those adopted by other ethnic groups. A marked characteristic of so-called ethnic conflict, so much a feature of the 20th and 21st centuries, has been its sudden and often unpredictable explosion, set amidst, sometimes long, histories of and even subsequently regained peaceful co-existence. One reason for this phenomenon would appear to be that the bases for collective action and feeling in society are multidimensional, and it is the balance between these that normally allows most complex communities to work effectively.[12] For example, race, religion, neighbourliness, or economics may provide such bases just as much as does ethnicity. This then prompts the question: what are the circumstances in which, in the modern context, the last, ethnicity, becomes over-riding, masking the effect of the others, and so provokes

[11] D. Buell, *Why this New Race? Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*, New York 2005; see also Lieu, 2004.

[12] See M. Banton, *Ethnic Conflict*, in: Sociology 34 (2000), 481-498.

conflict? This becomes particularly relevant once it is recognised that persecution of Christians in the earliest period was neither endemic nor relentless, but was localised and unpredictable, and yet nonetheless violent.

4. A particular useful insight in addressing this question is offered by Michael Banton's emphasis on the significance of the role of those whom he calls 'mobilisers'. These are individuals whose achievement is "by rhetoric, to reduce the multidimensionality of relations by making one dimension appear all-important".[13] Although Banton does not pursue the point, it is evident that this 'rhetoric' may be oral - the sermon - but may also take other forms - the internet site. Again, this leads directly to possible questions: who are the 'mobilisers' in late antiquity? Are they to be found equally among Jews, Christians, and 'pagans', or are they more characteristic of one group than of another? What are their strategies and what authority do they claim? Any answers must identify not only individuals within the social context but also consider particular literary texts or genres.

5. The final three areas for re-imagining are identified by recent emphases in the study of late antique religious life. An initial challenge to an over-simplistic, and at the time largely binary (pagan *versus* Christian), conflict model was offered by the 'market place' model, which was proposed in 1992 in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians*.[14] Market place does suggest competition, but this need not result in conflict unless the competition is over limited resources. Indeed, competition may thrive on, and may therefore seek to maintain, the existence of competitors; it need not, then, result in a monopoly. To the extent that this model has been found useful as a way of understanding the *religious* world of late antiquity, how far

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[13] Banton, 2000, 496; Although this was written in 2000, the concept is now a familiar one to residents of the UK. The term is a common one in diverse forms of social action, implying something more proactive than 'facilitators', but often being responsible for the local implementation of more extensive initiatives. Banton's model does not imply such a chain of command or action.

[14] J.M. Lieu / J. North / T. Rajak (eds.), *The Jews among Pagans and Christians*, London 1992; see especially the editors' Introduction (1-8) and J. North, *The Development of Religious Pluralism*, ibid., 174-193.

can it be translated into a model for understanding the *social* world, that is, for the co-existence of groups?[15]

6. If there is anything approaching a consensus on what may still be called 'early Christianity', it is surely that its chief mark is diversity. Although it may prove more difficult to describe and to document this, the same is evidently true of Judaism even after 70CE, and, necessarily so - since the unifying label is a later imposition - of 'paganism'. The multiple players who populate the stage of late antiquity are not defined by the simple triangular antitheses between 'pagans', Christians, and Jews. There are multiple conflicts, coalitions, and convergences, both expected and unexpected. Obvious candidates for consideration here would be those groups conventionally - by scholars - labelled God-fearers, or Jewish-Christians, or, equally, some of those identified as Gnostics. This is not to move from a tripartite to a multi-partite model, for none of these groups are cohesive while the boundaries between them are ill-defined. It is to undermine the simplicities of mapping relationships only in oppositional and conflictual terms.

7. If this is what emerges from the literary sources, once viewed without canonical preference, and with an eye to their rhetorical strategies, material remains suggest even more complex patterns of social co-existence. It has become an increasingly familiar refrain among students of late antiquity that, to quote Stephen Mitchell,

> the principal categories into which we divide the religious groupings of late antiquity are simply inappropriate or misleading when applied to the beliefs and practices of a significant proportion of the population of the eastern Roman empire.[16]

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[15] This is not to repeat the error of assuming that religion was a self-contained sphere, separate from the social, a view *The Jews among Pagans and Christians* clearly rejects, but to seek a clearer picture of the actual social realities.

[16] S. Mitchell, *The Cult of Theos Hypsistos between Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, in: P. Athanassiadi / M. Frede (eds.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 1999, 81-148.

This observation arises from the failure of epigraphic formulae and terminology, iconography, or burial patterns and styles, to reflect the categorical and convictional oppositions that would allow their modern interpreters to place them; although conflict is not unknown - one might think of the 'Christians for the Christians' inscriptions - this is not the dominant pattern of relationship.

The second part of this paper will consider these seven points in relation to the apologetic and the martyrological literature of the second century, and with specific reference to the model of conflict between Jews, Christians, and 'pagans'.

There has long been debate over what it was that provoked the rise of apologetic literature in the middle of the second century, and this has been exacerbated by disagreement over whether any of the Apologies realistically can have been intended for the Emperors' own eyes, never mind could have succeeded in that intention. Who was expected to read them, and who did indeed read them? Are they designed to mitigate conflict - to undermine persecution 'for the name', by exposing its irrationality for the authorities who can act, and to prove the emptiness of the routine charges laid against the Christians? Or do they promote conflict, by carrying the battle on behalf of Christian readers into the enemy's territory, denouncing its values and deities, and threatening ultimate punishment? How would the Apologies look if read from the perspective of a consensus model? In what ways do they seek to effect change through evolution rather than through revolution? Justin Martyr draws on his Logos doctrine to celebrate Socrates and others as 'Christians before Christ', while Melito appeals to the convergence between the appearance of Christianity and the flourishing of the Empire since Augustus.[17] Theophilus of Antioch appeals to nature to support the idea of resurrection, while Athenagoras suggests that little is required of the Emperors to support the Christians other than to act by their already-proven virtues.[18] Although they testify to the actuality of conflict, these writers imply that it is not inevitable, nor is it so fixed within the structures of society that it cannot

[17] Just., 1 apol. 46; Melito in Eus., h.e. 4.26,7.

[18] Theoph., Autol. 1.13; Athen., leg. 37.

be defused. The apologetic genre by definition anticipates change by consensus.

As such the Apologies presuppose the multiple identities that would allow for the discovery of alternative bases for collective action and feeling. They appeal to shared values in ethics and they claim a common history. Appealing to earlier philosophers, Justin asks, "receive us, even if you receive us only on an equality with them", but he also asserts that Christians are the most dutiful of tax-payers and diligent subjects (1 apol. 17f.). Athenagoras' goal is "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life and at the same time willingly do all that is commanded" (leg. 37.3). The Apologists do not, of course, deny Christian difference, nor its depth; what they do is to deny that this one characteristic outweighs all others so as to make any co-existence impossible. Hence, while they accept the label 'Christian' and even begin to use the language of race, they contain this within a broader framework of co-existence: for most Apologists, Christians, whatever their origin, are emphatically not 'barbarians', those who in the ancient world form a common 'Other' - in whose number they sometimes included the Jews (e.g. Melito).[19]

Were the Apologists deceiving either themselves or their readers, wherever these were to be found? There is another note in the Apologies that might well seem to undermine all their protestations of common cause and perhaps signal their true convictions. Justin Martyr warns that if the Emperor fails to heed their loyalty "we believe, or rather are indeed persuaded, that every person will suffer punishment in eternal fire according to the merit of their actions" (1 apol. 17), and Aristides ends his summons with the threat of "the terrible judgement that shall come upon the whole human race through Jesus Christ" (Syr. Apol. 17.8). In making the rejection of the worship of other deities, and specifically the denunciation of idolatry, their main theme, the Apologists could be said to satisfy Jan Assmann's diagnosis of the conflictual heart of monotheism: for him the 'Mosaic distinction' is fundamentally that between true religion and idolatry. However, to the extent that the Apologists postpone that resolution until the eschatological future and to the plane of God's kingdom, it does not belong to the present social context where co-operation is

[19] On 'the Barbarians' as 'Other' see Lieu, 2004, 271-279.

still possible. Moreover, when Aristides directs the denunciation of idolatry against the Greeks he is cleverly avoiding direct confrontation with his supposed Roman audience; if anything he is inviting them into common cause with him against the follies of those who were sometimes already distrusted. But was this wishful thinking without foundation? Surely not; even if idealised, apologetic directs attention towards those bases for harmony that are already functioning. If in practise most readers were insiders, Christians, whose lives were balanced between daily co-existence - the normal for most of the time - and the fear of denunciation and suffering - perhaps equally normal - the Apologies foster commitment to the former, to co-existence, despite the seriousness of the latter.

From the perspective of the Apologists the 'mobilisers' are not to be found among their own ranks; the mobilisers are the purveyors of slanders and false accusations, and the ostensible audience, the Emperors, also have no responsibility for them. It is these who turn difference into incompatibility; like Josephus before them, the Apologists are quick to show that the charges of exclusivity and unsociability are totally without foundation.[20] In Justin's *Apology* these mobilisers of difference are also to be found among the Jews "who consider us enemies and opponents" (1 apol. 31; 35). Justin can exploit the recent conflict of the Bar Kochba revolt to his own advantage, implicitly forging an alliance with the Romans against a common internal enemy (1 apol. 31; 47). However, despite his own location in Rome he consistently identifies the Jews as opponents with the inhabitants of Judaea;[21] in so doing he leaves the door open for a more open relationship with the diasporic Jews who are largely invisible in his vision of social relationships. Indeed, his fiercest anger is against those who also claim a Christian self-definition but whose convictions and life style he rejects, the followers of Simon, Marcion and others (1 apol. 26). If in fact the primary readers even of the Apologies would have been other Christians it must be asked how this enabled them to maintain their multiple identities and loyalties. This becomes even more explicit in Justin's treatment

[20] Cf. Jos., Ap. 2.124; 2.261; 2.282.

[21] See J. Lieu, *Image and Reality. The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century*, Edinburgh 1996, 177f.

of believers who maintain a Jewish praxis in the *Dialogue*, which is remarkable for its search for a consensual basis even where this conflicts with his theoretical attitude to circumcision and other aspects of Jewish practice (Just., dial. 47).

Aristides' treatment of the Jews, particularly in the Syriac version of his *Apology* (14-15), provides a very different model of potential co-existence; despite his dismissal of their religious failings he makes more of their social and communal values, which they effectively share with the Christians. Theophilus of Antioch's *To Autolycus*, which has few distinctive 'Christian' characteristics and has even been seen as loosely reworked from Jewish apologetics, comes even closer to the pattern of porous boundaries suggested earlier by the material evidence.[22]

In contrast to the Apologists, the Martyr Acts operate with a very different view of society. As already noted, there the confession of being a Christian both marks and provokes irreconcilable difference that inevitably is expressed in conflict. For Perpetua her self-labelling as Christian is inalienable and irreplaceable, itself replacing her duty of filial obedience to her father (Mart.Perp. 3); for others, 'Christian' takes the place of any other civic or social identity: Sanctus replies to every question, "I am a Christian": "this he said in place of name and city and race and everything."[23] In these texts idolatry is rejected not because with sufficient argument all parties could agree on its inherent irrationality, as is assumed by the Apologists, but as an act of defiance against the Emperor and as a symbol of the impossibility of dialogue or of compromise: when urged to venerate the gods as commanded by the Emperor Carpus replies, "I will not sacrifice to idols such as these. It is impossible for me to sacrifice to deceitful manifestations of demons" (Greek Mart. Carp. 5-10). Consensus is ruled out, and the opponents, whether the mob or the prosecuting consul, are regularly represented as having lost the characteristics of a sane and civilised society, acting with barbaric madness and violence (Eus., h.e. 5.1,7). At the same time, and as is well known, the conflict that results in the death of the confessors is by the telling inverted; in the moment of his

[22] Lieu, 2004, 84f.

[23] Eus., h.e. 5.1,20f.

death Polycarp is crowned with the garland of immortality and has achieved an incontestable prize (Mart.Polyc. 19). The victims become the victors, the persecutors are the tools of demonic forces beyond their power; in the future lies the certain hope for the martyrs of ultimate triumph, for the oppressors terrible judgement. Yet, unlike the Apologies, this threatened denouement is not postponed for the future, but already shapes the possibilities and the meaning of the present.

Behind this apparently monolithic universe built around conflict, however, there are glimpses of a more complex reality. The very suddenness of the persecution and the lack of any clear cause presuppose earlier, more 'normal', co-existence. The persecution at Lyons begins as "we were not only shut out of houses and baths and the public square, but any form of appearance in any place at all was forbidden by them", thus implicitly interrupting their normal association in these places (Eus., h.e. 5.1,5). At the end of the account, the celebration of the martyr's death acknowledges the continuing lives of those who will not join the martyr in any act of resistance (Mart. Polyc. 18); even during the action itself the narrative presupposes that there are those who watch, some more prominent (Eus., h.e. 5.1,49), others necessarily there because there were those able to tell the story even if their presence is never acknowledged or explained. The absent father of Perpetua's child, the children Agathonice readily entrusts to God, the owner and friends of the slave Euelpistus, hint at other relationships and identities, hitherto unchallenged.[24] At the same time, those who bribe the soldiers in order to alleviate the prison conditions of a Perpetua or of a Peregrinus in Lucian's revealing satire also acknowledge other patterns of relationship and negotiation in society.[25] Moreover, the epistolary format of the two earliest accounts, the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* and the *Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne*, explicitly acknowledges that such violence is after all not the norm and that it requires that some explanation be given to other communities living not so very far distant.

Further, although the Martyr Acts make their own judgements, they nonetheless betray to the careful reader the other actors in the

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[24] Mart.Perp.2; Mart.Carp. 6; Mart.Just. B.4.

[25] Mart.Perp.3.7; Luc., Peregr. 14.

drama that they themselves construct, from those who put themselves forward to those who recant - even when these are the same people. Moreover, martyrdom enforces co-existence, or co-mortality, between those who would otherwise reject each other, Montanists, Marcionites and the so-called proto-orthodox: surprisingly, indeed, here the Martyr Acts could be said to be more hospitable to difference than are the Apologies (Mart.Polyc. 4; Eus., h.e. 4.15,46; 5.1,49; 5.3,2f.).

The role of the Jews in all this is notoriously problematic. Most of the time, especially when compared with the later Martyr Acts and with other texts, they are notable for their absence. How were they caught up in these outbursts of violence? Their active involvement in the story of Polycarp (Mart.Polyc. 13.1; 17.2-18), and their more ambivalent one in that of Pionius, where indeed it is the martyr who rejects the hospitality offered by the Jews (Mart.Pion. 13), do nothing to solve the problem. Did they provoke or alleviate? Were they, after all, always distinguishable, and from whom? The still unresolved question of the literary and symbolic relationship between Christian and Jewish martyr accounts only complicates the issue, again hinting at patterns of co-operation as well as of competition, although not necessarily of conflict.[26]

Michael Banton's introduction of the role of the mobilisers also suggests further questions. If the primary concern is with the social context of persecution then it would be necessary to balance both imperial rescript and local outbreaks of violence, incorporating, too, the anonymous denunciations deplored by Trajan. Tertullian's mocking reference to those who blame the Christians "for every disaster to the state or calamity to the people" (apol. 40.1f.) rings true; the urge to blame someone in time of misfortune, even natural disaster, easily targets an identifiable minority who for years may have been readily tolerated. Here ideology plays little role and, contrary to many of Banton's modern examples, in the second century we are not yet looking for those who had somehow been schooled in a more absolutist interpretation of their 'pagan' identity. In fact, it may be easier to find the mobilisers on the Christian side, for, according to the Martyr Acts, it was they who so exalted their Christian conviction, and refused any invitation

[26] See no. 1; if 4Macc. is late, the issue is exacerbated.

to compromise, that confrontation was inevitable and irreconcilable. This would support a reading that saw persecution as the reaction to Christian stubbornness: they were persecuted because they readily invited persecution - although it would be possible to interpret even this as a curious if not perverse form of consensual activity.

Yet this picture needs nuancing in order to explain why, even according to the Martyr Acts, many escaped arrest and only a few saw the need to put themselves forward. This ambiguity inheres within the Acts themselves; as a literary genre, it is the Martyr Acts that could be described as mobilisers, for it is their task to create a compelling visual drama in which a true Christian identity has absolute priority over all other loyalties and patterns of belonging. They promise, as has been seen, to the martyrs a victory and unassailable status that relativises any other claim. Yet, although these Acts were undoubtedly intended to encourage their readers and to present a model of discipleship, they do not seem to invite actual imitation. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* concludes:

> We love the martyrs as disciples and imitators of the Lord, rightly because of their unsurpassed loyalty to their king and teacher. Would that we also might become partakers and fellow disciples with them! (17.3).

Yet this final wish is not an exhortation to go out and seek confrontation, and the same text cautions against those who do offer themselves for martyrdom: "Therefore, brothers, we do not praise those who put themselves forward for the Gospel does not teach such behaviour." (4). Indeed, there is almost a sense in which the experience of the literary text acts as a surrogate for engagement in actual conflict. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* closes with a succession of transcribers, the last of whom prays, "that the Lord Jesus Christ may gather me also with his elect into his heavenly kingdom" (Mart. Polyc. 22); similarly the *Passion of Perpetua* opens by comparing this account of recent events with those of Scripture "so that God might be honoured and humans comforted by their reading as if by their representation" (Mart.Perp. 1).

The intention of this paper has not been to deny that there was conflict between so-called 'pagans', Christians, and Jews, nor to

offer an alternative, more sanguine picture of tolerant disinterest. Social relations are, however, complex, and social models of how society functions necessarily impose order where chaos reigns - and this is true whether we favour models built on conflict or those built on consensus. Changing the model offers new ways of examining participants' behaviour, and in particular the interaction between that of the different participants and the way it was interpreted on all sides. Further, this paper is first of all a reading of the literary texts, not an attempt to delve behind them to some 'real situation' hidden there - although it has already been noted that a growing consensus sees that 'real situation' far more as one of conscious or unconscious co-existence and co-operation. Yet, even without reading between the lines, these texts are equally multiform, open to different readings and to different constructions, betraying other possibilities. Whether or not we wish to conceptualise this in terms of suppressed or repressed memory,[27] they mirror the ambiguities even when most vehemently denying them. The unresolved question this poses is whether these are the ambiguities of actual experience, as it were resisting the control of the texts, or whether they are the ambiguities of aspiration, offering a glimpse of some other alternative.

[27] Cf. Assman, 1997.

Criticism of Judaism in Greek and Roman Sources: Charges and Apologetics (Fourth Century BC to Second Century AD)[1]

Oda Wischmeyer

1. Approaches

1.1. The subject of the 'Criticism of Judaism in Greek and Roman Sources' opens a densely researched field of philological textual exegesis, historical reconstruction and historical cause study. Here the scholarly debate about anti-Semitism, which is widely ramified and influenced by diverse interests and different levels of knowledge, is still in the lead, linking historical, methodical, ethical and political aspects. Focussing on academic literature on the relevant ancient texts alone, which constitute but one early section of the European literature on anti-Semitism, reveals the sheer abundance of publications in this field. Questions are raised, specified and modified; they coincide, are attacked, revoked, and abandoned.[2] Particularly the advance of research on anti-Semitism in the ancient world occurred intermittently, where new approaches were generally devised in contradiction to - or at least decidedly amending - previous ones. My contribution "Criticism of Judaism in Greek and Roman Sources' will be placed in this intricate and sensitive field as follows:

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[1] I wish to thank Susanne Luther from my Erlangen chair of New Testament for taking care of the English translation of my paper.

[2] See Z. Yavetz, *Judeophobia in Classical Antiquity*, in: JJS 44 (1993), 1-22; P. Schäfer, *Judeophobia. Attitudes towards the Jews in the Ancient World*, Cambridge 1997, 197-211. Schäfer refers to Gavin I. Langmuir and J.N. Sevenster. Recently: H. Lichtenberger, *Judaeophobia - von der antiken Judenfeindschaft zum christlichen Antijudaismus*, in: G. Gelardini (ed.), *Kontexte der Schrift. Vol. 1. Text, Ethik, Judentum und Christentum, Gesellschaft. Ekkehard W. Stegemann zum 60. Geburtstag*, Stuttgart 2005, 168-181.

1. This lecture is not concerned with the historical question of the origins of anti-Semitism, but rather with the factual issue of the criticism of Judaism in Greco-Roman Antiquity, with its main arguments and charges.

2. For this lecture I have chosen the critical statements of Greek and Latin pagan writers from the 4th century BC to the first half of the 2nd century AD, as we can already find the whole set of relevant pagan charges against Judaism in this period.[3] Christian allegations from New Testament and post-New Testament times will be neglected[4] as will pagan charges against Christians.[5]

3. Four types of theoretical and historical framework are important for my paper. The first and *overall* setting for my quest is the historical question of the perception of *aliens* by Greeks and Romans. Since G. LaPiana's study[6] in 1927, many and for the most part rather extensive contributions have paid attention to the subject of 'Greeks / Romans and barbarians'. Here I want to mention the eminent studies of J.P.V.D. Baldson[7] and Y.A. Dauge[8]. In this context, Jews appear to be a special genus of barbarians. Classical philology has treated the subject in respect to its genre within the context of Greek and Roman ethnography. René Bloch[9] applied this approach to the passages on Jews in Greco-Roman literature.

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[3] For the following centuries cf. M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism. Vol. 2*, Jerusalem 1980. On the topic of infant exposure see D.R. Schwartz, *Did the Jews Practice Infant Exposure and Infanticide in Antiquity?*, in: The Studia Philonica Annual 16 (2004), 61-95.

[4] See Lichtenberger, 2005.

[5] As an introduction see G. Lührmann, *Superstitio - die Beurteilung des frühen Christentums durch die Römer*, in: ThZ 42 (1986), 193-213 (esp. on Tacitus, Suetonius and Pliny). See also H. Conzelmann, *Heiden - Juden - Christen*, BHTh 62, Tübingen 1981.

[6] G. LaPiana, *Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire*, in: HThR 20 (1927), 183-403.

[7] J.P.V.D. Baldson, *Romans and Aliens*, London 1979.

[8] Y.A. Dauge, *Le Barbare. Recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation*, CollLat 176, Bruxelles 1981.

[9] R. Bloch, *Antike Vorstellungen vom Judentum. Der Judenexkurs des Tacitus im Rahmen der griechisch-römischen Ethnographie*, Historia 160, Stuttgart 2002.

A *second* and even more comprehensive setting is the discourse on alterity and identity in the field of cultural anthropology. In this context the perception of barbarians and the criticism of Judaism in antiquity work as an example of a specific way of dealing with cultural differences in the field of Greco-Roman history.[10]

A *third* setting may be found in the aforementioned discourse on anti-Semitism.[11] Within the scope of this lecture it will not be possible - neither methodically nor materially - to take into consideration cognate issues, like 'the historical roots of anti-Semitism', 'anti-Semitism in Greco-Roman antiquity', 'anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism or judeophobia in antiquity'.

A *final* setting is announced by the topic of the conference. The leading issue of the conference is apologetics, and so I will try to bring together the question for criticism of Judaism and the issue of apologetics at the end of my paper.

1.2. I will move on to the term *criticism*. Criticism manifests itself in the linguistic-propositional way by means of allegations and charges. In his most important publication *Les juifs dans l'empire romain,*

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[10] F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, Bergen 1969; V.E. Bonnell / L. Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn. New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, Berkeley 1999; B. Anderson, *Imagined communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London 2002; D. Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns. Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften*, Hamburg ²2007; J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)*, Edinburgh 1996. See also J.M.G. Barclay, *Flavius Josephus. Translation and Commentary 10. Against Apion*, Leiden 2007, xvii-lxxi (no. 77).

[11] I. Heinemann, *Antisemitismus*, in: PRE.S 5 (1931), 3-43; K.S. Pinson (ed.), *Essays on Antisemitism*, JSocS.P 2, New York 1946; R. Marcus, *Antisemitism in the Hellenistic-Roman World*, in: Pinson (ed.), *Essays on Antisemitism*, JSocS.P 2, New York 1946, 61-78; J.N. Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World*, NT.S 41, Leiden 1975; J.G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-semitism. Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, New York 1983; Th. Klein / V. Losemann / G. Mai (eds.), *Judentum und Antisemitismus von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Düsseldorf 1984; L.H. Feldman, *Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World*, in: D. Berger (ed.), *History and Hate. The Dimensions of Anti-Semitism*, Philadelphia 1986, 15-42; R. Walz, *Der vormoderne Antisemitismus. Religiöser Fanatismus oder Rassenwahn?*, in: HZ 260 (1995), 719-748.

dating back to 1914, Jean Juster provides a comprehensive list of these charges.[12] Here we find a broad base for our investigation. Criticism presupposes perception, the ability to judge, and certain set standards. Facts, objects, and men are not merely described, but they are compared and set in relation to the critics. The critics view themselves - consciously or unconsciously - as the judicial authority. The set standards, which are particularly frequently drawn from ethics and morals, vary. In many cases criticism renders a negative judgement, i.e. the critics relate to the criticised matter by means of rejection. Thus, criticism can be said to be the examination of a subject matter surpassing mere perception and description, often resulting in a negative judgement. As criticism does not intend to be neutral, it can - even in places where it renders a negative judgement - contain an element of empathy, which in turn can also be expressed through rejection and hatred. Given this, from the picture painted by the criticism, we simply cannot draw conclusions about any historical reality.

If criticism arises from perception, this study has to centre on the question of how Judaism was perceived in Greek and Latin sources. This subject matter also has been discussed in detail in academic literature. All of it is based on the compilation of sources by Menachem Stern,[13] whose learned commentaries are indispensable for our scholarly work. Among other recent monographs, the excellent works of Louis H. Feldman[14] and Peter Schäfer[15] must be mentioned. Within this framework my examination will be confined to the critical per-

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[12] J. Juster, *Les juifs dans l'empire romain. Leur condition juridique, économique et sociale.* 2nd repr., New York 1965, 43f. Compare the list of charges against the barbarians in: Dauge, 1981, 413-449.

[13] M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism, Vol. 1-3,* Jerusalem 1976.1980.1984. M. Hadas-Lebel's eminent study on the Jewish view on Rome completes the picture of the encounter between Rome and Judaism: M. Hadas-Lebel, *Jerusalem against Rome,* Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 7, Leuven 2006 (= M. Hadas-Lebel, *Jer. c. Rome,* Paris 1990).

[14] L.H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World. Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian,* Princeton 1993.

[15] Schäfer, 1997.

ception of Jews in the Greco-Roman literature between Hecataeus of Abdera (c. 300 BC) and Suetonius (1st half of the 2nd century AD).

1.3. I will close the introduction with two preliminary remarks. *Firstly,* I must specify the kinds of sources upon which the examinations presented here are based: these are exclusively literary; the large epigraphic tradition has been neglected.[16] Their literary genre is of great importance for the interpretation of the passages to which we refer in this study.[17] Moreover we have to consider that the authors were men of letters, i.e. a very small group of men, to a certain extent outstanding personalities: some of them politicians, others the teachers of future politicians, most of them important figures in public life. Central to our quest will be the investigation of the extent to which their own experiences and opinions influenced their relation to Judaism. It is essential to indicate at this point that there is no common 'Greco-Roman criticism of Judaism'. In fact we have to analyse the mosaic of utterances obtained from a small circle of men of letters, whose statements were connected by diverse historical and social dependencies.[18] In addition we will not be able to trace the quotidian reality of the perception of Jews by Greek and Roman Non-Jews in antiquity, for it varied exceedingly regionally and temporally, and furthermore it cannot only be derived from literature.[19]

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[16] See the volumes of the series D. Noy / A. Panayotov / H. Bloedhorn (eds.), *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis. Eastern Europe. 1*, TSAJ 101, Tübingen 2004; W. Ameling (ed.), *Kleinasien. 2*, TSAJ 99, Tübingen 2004; D. Noy / H. Bloedhorn (eds.), *Syria and Cyprus. 3*, TSAJ 102, Tübingen 2004 (reviewed by P.W. van der Horst, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis. A Review Article*, in: P.W. van der Horst, *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context*, WUNT 196, Tübingen 2006, 71-86); for the Oenoanda inscription see especially: P.W. van der Horst, *The Most Superstitious and Disgusting of All Nations. Diogenes of Oenoanda on the Jews*, in: van der Horst, 2006, 227-233.

[17] See Stern, 1976 and 1980 as well as Bloch, 2002.

[18] For a detailed review on the debates concerning sources and dependencies see Stern, 1976.1980.1984.

[19] The most likely sources to give valuable evidence are Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium* and Josephus' writings. It is unlikely that Jews in Greek and Roman cities were recognizible by their outward appearance. They were probably classified as Syrians.

Secondly, the criteria for the selection of sources have to be illustrated. Even though a critical presentation of Judaism prevails strongly over texts which yield a positive perception,[20] we actually also find detailed and short passages dealing with Judaism, which are entirely un-polemical. I mention only Strabo of Amasia (64 BC - 20s of the 1st century AD),[21] an author living in Rome, whose *Geographica* contains an extensive geographical and historical passage about Ἰουδαία in the context of a description of Syria. Moses is presented as a lawgiver and promoter of a perfectly reasonable worship of God and is aligned to non-Jewish prophets of antiquity. Pliny the Elder[22] (23/24-79 AD) confines himself in his *Naturalis historia* to a detailed geographical description of Palestine, in the context of which he refers to the Essenes in a neutral or even positive way. In general, it may be said that literary works of an historical or geographic-ethnographical nature tend to be rather un-polemical pertaining to Jews,[23] yet - to anticipate - at this point I want to stress that this does not apply to Tacitus.[24]

Examining the phenomenon of a certain admiration of Jews at different epochs, the historian Ernst Baltrusch reached the following conclusions:

> Man kann also festhalten, dass eine bewundernde Haltung gegenüber dem Judentum sich in unmittelbarem Anschluß an die Eroberung Alexanders des Großen [...] und dann erst wieder im Zusammenhang mit dem Aufstieg des Christentums seit dem 3. Jh. n.Chr. ausbreiten konnte.[25]

Illustrations are known of other barbarian peoples, but not of Jews. See S.J.D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness. Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, Berkeley 1999, 25-49; Baldson, 1979, 214-159 ; M. Dubuisson, *La vision romaine de l'étranger. Stereotypes, ideologie et mentalités*, in: Cahiers de Clio 81 (1985), 82-98.

[20] E.g. Pseudo-Longinus (Stern, 1976, No. 148, 361f.).

[21] See Stern, 1976, No. 98-124 (No. 115).

[22] Stern, 1976, No. 203-225.

[23] Since Aristotle, Theophrastus and Hieronymus of Kardia (Stern, 1976, No. 3.6.10).

[24] But even in Tacitus we find non-critical passages, such as the description of the cultic worship on Mount Carmel, *Historiae* 2.78,3 (Stern, 1980, No. 278).

[25] E. Baltrusch, *Bewunderung, Duldung, Ablehnung. Das Urteil über die Juden in der griechisch-römischen Literatur*, in: Klio 80 (1998), 403-421 (410).

Baltrusch refers especially to Hecataeus of Abdera and to Varro (1st century BC in Rome). L. Feldman likewise stresses a certain success of "the Jews in antiquity" who in spite of pagan hatred won "so many adherents".[26]

2. Main Charges against Jews and Judaism

This is where I want to start with a survey of the sources of critical attitude towards Jews in the chosen period. The first author who perceives Jews critically is Theophrastus, the pupil of Alkippus, in his work *De pietate*:[27] the Jews are counted among the Syrians. The situation of living in the diaspora does not yet seem of any interest. He views the Jews as a species (γένος) of Eastern philosophers and speaks in a neutral to positive way about their philosophic-astronomical faith (τὸ θεῖον). On the other hand he criticizes their practice of sacrificing, referring to the holocaust sacrifice. However, he remarks in an apologetic way that they were forced to do this.[28] This momentous - yet not critical - assertion, that the Jews would also sacrifice human beings, can only be understood in the context of Phoenician sacrifices.[29]

We can also find this critical perception, which is centred on religious practice, with Hecataeus of Abdera (4th century - c. 300 BC, Sparta). To him we owe the first passage on Judaism (*Judenexkurs*).[30] René Bloch has recently presented a brief and profound analysis

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[26] Feldman, 1993, XI.

[27] 371-287/286 BC Athenian Philosopher. See W. Fortenbaugh / J.M. van Ophuijsen, *Theophrastos*, in: DNP 12/1 (2002), 385-393. Concerning the chronological relation between Theophrastus and Hecataeus of Abdera see Stern, 1976, 8f.

[28] See Stern, 1976, 11f.

[29] Most recent literature: P.W. van der Horst, *De Mythe van het joodse Kannibalisme*, at: http://www.trouw.nl/redactie/pdf/afscheidscoll.pdf (27/3/2008); further important literature: A. Jakoby, *Der angebliche Eselskult der Juden und Christen*, in: ARW 25 (1927), 265-282; E. Bickerman, *Ritualmord und Eselskult*, in: Studies in Jewish and Christian History 2, AGJU 9, Leiden 1980, 225-255. The same charge was brought against Christians, see also Jakoby also A. McGowan, *Eating People. Accusations of Cannibalism Against Christians in the Second Century*, in: Journal of Early Christian Studies 2 (1994), 413-442.

[30] For introductory reading see R. Bloch, 2002, 22-63.

of the text, so that there is no need to go into great detail here. Of primary importance is the location of this passage within the work of Hecataeus. It was probably situated in the context of "the apoikai chapters in Aigyptiaka".[31] Bloch observes the following structure in *Hecataeus'* text: origo - αἴτιον - κτίσις - νόμιμα. We find it preserved in Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheka Historika*.[32] In Hecataeus, Moses is portrayed as the "allumfassende [...] ktistes der jüdischen Kolonie"[33], who also established the Jewish religion. As Bloch stresses decidedly, the keyword ἀλλάττεσθαι - being different[34] - is pivotal. Hecataeus ascribes this "being different" to the so called xenolasy, the expulsion of Jews from Egypt:

> τὰς δὲ θυσίας ἐξηλλαγμένας συνεστήσατο τῶν παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐθνεσιν, καὶ τὰς κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀγωγάς. διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἰδίαν ξενηλασίαν ἀπάνθρωπόν τινα καὶ μισόξενον βίον εἰσηγήσατο.

Bloch translates this passage as follows:

> Er setzte Opfer und eine Lebensweise fest, die sich von derjenigen der anderen Völker unterschieden; aufgrund der am eigenen Leib erfahrenen Fremdenvertreibung führte er nämlich eine recht asoziale und fremdenfeindliche Lebensweise ein.[35]

Bloch elaborates on the fact that Hecataeus explains this aspect of 'being different', which seems inherent to Jewish identity, by referring to their history. His line of argument is as follows: xenolasy - misanthropy - customs.[36] Here we find a definite indication concerning our question on the historical and cultural roots of the critical perception of

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[31] Bloch, 2002, 33. In Diodorus Siculus we find an interesting new position: the very passage is set within the account of Pompey's campaign (Bloch, 2002, 34).

[32] Book XL, 3.

[33] Bloch, 2002, 35.

[34] Bloch, 2002, 35 for *Xenolasie*.

[35] Bloch, 2002, 31.

[36] Bloch, 2002, 38.

Judaism. Hecataeus, whose work does not reveal any prejudice or hostility towards Judaism, but far more the aspiration to find an adequate and understanding manner of description,[37] and who in many ways presents a correct description of important characteristics of Judaism,[38] emphasizes the Jews' 'being different', which leads to a distanced relationship to other human beings and to xenophobia. This diagnosis from an erudite and influential Greek author was to attain great importance. The straight line of his argumentation is: Jewish people are different. Normal are 'the other peoples', i.e. the Greeks.

Manetho (3rd century BC), an "Egyptian high priest at Heliopolis in the early Ptolemaic period,"[39] is regarded as the first Egyptian author who expressed criticism of Judaism. His *Aigyptiaka* dealt with the history of Egypt up to 342 BC. Josephus quotes from the second book of Manetho's *Aigyptiaka* in extenso in *Contra Apionem* 1.14,15 and 26-31 and disproves him in this passage.[40]

Here we have entered the field of polemical historiography. Manetho equates the Hyksos with the Israelites and turns them into the founders of Jerusalem (c. Ap. 1.14). Moreover, he transmits the Egyptian legend of the Israelites being leprous Egyptians who were exiled by pharaoh, submitted to the guidance of a priest from Heliopolis named Osariph-Moses and were led to Jerusalem.

It is significant that Manetho perceives the Israelite rejection of Egyptian religious customs with a distinct bias concerning the history of the religions aspect:

> above all Moses now imposed on them the law (νόμον ἔθετο) not to worship the gods (προσκυνεῖν), not to spare any of those animals that were considered particularly holy in Egypt, but to slaughter and eat them, and not to interact with those outside the law (συνάπτεσθαι δὲ μηδενὶ πλὴν τῶν συνωμοσμένων).[41]

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[37] See Bloch, 2002, 40. Here we also find appropriate critical considerations concerning Philo-Semitism in Hecataeus (see especially Bloch, 2002, 39).

[38] Bloch, 2002, 41 no. 56.

[39] R. Krauss, *Manethon*, in: DNP 7 (1999), 804f.

[40] Stern, 1976, 62-86.

[41] Jos., c. Ap. 26.1,239 (see also the exaggerated description in 249).

Josephus compares our next author to Manetho. This is Poseidonius of Apameia (c. 135-51 BC): born a Syrian Greek, he became a Stoic philosopher and ran a school of philosophy on Rhodes and was one of Cicero's teachers of Philosophy.[42] In his work *Historiai*[43], of which we only have fragments, Poseidonius mentions Jews in a context we cannot reconstruct today. Nevertheless his opinion on Jews is of great importance, because Apollonius Molon and Apion have adopted it.[44] Poseidonius criticized the Jews' own distinctive worship of God. Josephus writes: *accusant nos, quare nos eosdem deos cum aliis non colimus.*[45] Furthermore he seems to have attacked[46] the Temple worship - a touchy subject for the priest Josephus.[47] Once again the focus on religion in the critical perception is evident. I want to point out here that Poseidonius' critical attitude towards Jews is historically of utmost significance for his literary successors as much as for Cicero's notion of Jews.

This applies even more so to Apollonius Molon (1st century BC), the teacher of both Caesar and Cicero, the best known orator of his time, likewise settled in Rhodes.[48] Apollonius is considered to be the first author to write a book *On Jews* since Hecataeus of Abdera. We find fragments of this work in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica.*[49] Eusebius quotes Alexander Polyhistor. Extensive quotations can also be found in the second book of Josephus' work *Contra Apionem.* It is probably true that the perception of Jews in Roman literature was greatly influenced by Apollonius. Alexander Polyhistor speaks of Molon's invective (συσκευή, intrigue, conspiracy).[50] According to Josephus he shares Poseidonius' charges against Jews. In addition, Josephus reports that Apollonius interspersed anti-Jewish attacks in

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[42] B. Inwood, *Poseidonios (3)*, in: DNP 10 (2001), 211-215.

[43] FragGrHist II A87; F 70.

[44] For interdependencies see Stern, 1976, 141f.

[45] Jos., c. Ap. 2.79.

[46] Jos., c. Ap. 2.79.

[47] See O. Gussmann, *Das Priesterverständnis des Flavius Josephus*, Tübingen 2008.

[48] R. Hunter, *Apollonios (2, Rhodios)*, in: DNP 1 (1996), 874-879.

[49] Stern, 1976, 148-156.

[50] Eus., p.e. 9.19.

his works, which Josephus summarizes as:[51] ἄθεος - μισάνθρωπος - δειλία - τόλμα - ἀπόνοια. He then adds the harsh word about Jews as the "most ignorant of barbarians" (λέγει δὲ καὶ ἀφυεστάτους εἶναι τῶν βαρβάρων), who have never enhanced life through useful inventions.[52] Apollonius *Molon* called Moses a magician and defamed his commandments as a school of evil (κακία) instead of a school of virtue (ἀρετή).[53] Fundamental criticism is aimed at the Jewish aspiration to uphold their identity:

> Ὅτι μὴ παραδεχόμεθα τοὺς ἄλλαις προκατειλημμένους δόξαις περὶ θεοῦ, μηδὲ κοινωνεῖν ἐθέλομεν τοῖς καθ' ἑτέραν συνήθειαν βίου ζῆν προαιρουμένοις.[54]

Thackeray translates:

> (Apollonius Molon condemned us) for refusing admission to persons with other preconceived ideas about God, and for declining to associate with those who have chosen to adopt a different mode of life.[55]

It is interesting to see the exhaustive apology of Josephus, who demonstrates that all peoples of the ancient world were intent on upholding the identity of their community and on defending it against the outside world. In this argument we detect elements of a potential debate on identity and alterity, which was not taken up by contemporary or later authors. I will refer to this argument at the end of my contribution.

In the *Bibliotheca Historica* by Diodorus Siculus (1st century BC) we find a passage on Jews in connection with the conquest of Jerusalem by Antiochus Sidetes (ruled 138-129 BC) in 134 BC under

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[51] Jos., c. Ap. 2.14,148.

[52] See also 2.33,236: φαυλοτάτους ἀνθρώπων. The Jewish-hellenistic writers on the contrary call Moses the πρῶτος εὑρέτης: see Alexander Polyhistor, in: Eus., p.e. 9.26,1 and Artapanos, in: Eus., p.e. 9.27,1-37.

[53] L.c.145

[54] Jos., c. Ap. 2.36,258.

[55] Jos., c. Ap. 2.36,258.

the rule of Johannes Hyrcanus.[56] In current research, Poseidonius is assumed to have served as the source of this text, but Stern points out that this assignment remains hypothetical.[57] This is the first instance where we find the notion of the total annihilation of Jews in Greek literature. Friends advise the king of the Seleucids: τὸ γένος ἄρδην ἀνελεῖν τῶν Ἰουδαίων.[58] The reasons can be named: the Jewish rejection of ἐπιμιξία with other peoples and their hostility towards all others.

In this relatively long text, which Josephus does not quote in the *Antiquitates*, we find a coherent theory concerning Jewish nature, expressedly naming their misanthropic adherence to their own identity (τὸ μῖσος τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους) and the strangeness of the Jews and of their laws. They were expelled from Egypt under traumatic circumstances: as impious, hated by the Gods, leprous and under a curse. That is why they are said to have turned their hatred of men into a tradition (adj. παραδόσιμος). After that we find a historical retrospective on Antiochus Epiphanes, who had entered the Temple and found a statue of Moses riding on a donkey. Antiochus profaned the Temple by sacrificing a pig and then forced the priests and people to eat the pork.

This text is interesting because of the king's reaction. In his μεγαλοψυχία he dissociates the Jews from the reproaches (ἐγκλήματα) and refrains from destroying the city and annihilating the people. This final version of the text we have just looked at is thus explicitly not anti-Jewish. While the king's counsellors criticise

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[56] Bibl.Hist 34-35.1,1f. (FrGrHist II A87 F1 09). Stern, 1976, 181-185. For the historical background see G. Schürer / G. Vermes / F. Millar, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC - AD 135) 1*, Edinburgh 1973, 200-215. See also M. Friedländer, *Geschichte der jüdischen Apologetik als Vorgeschichte des Christentums*, Amsterdam 1973 (repr.), 122-126 (also for the parallel passage in Jos., *ant. Iud.* 31.8).

[57] Stern, 1976, 183f. no. 1 and 141f. Stern gives an introduction into the critical question for the sources and indicates, that an attribution to Poseidonius cannot be claimed with certainty, although the passage would fit well within Poseidonius' criticism of Judaism.

[58] Bibl.Hist 34-35.1,1 and 5. (ἄρδην, ἀναιρεῖν). See Est 3:13 (LXX).

the Jews following to the conventional inventory of reproaches, the king rejects those.

Looking at Cicero, we enter into the heart of Roman Literature. As is generally known, Cicero was neither interested in nor empathic towards Judaism. His *ad hoc* remarks about Jews have to be interpreted rather as the expression of a prevalent derogatory elitist indifference of the Roman political class towards barbarians in general and Jews in particular. This applies as much to the parenthetic characteristization of *Iudaeis et Syris* as *nationibus natis sevituti*[59] as to the well-known highly-polemical invective in the oration *For Flaccus*.[60] In the first instance we gain insight into Cicero's perception of the Jewish plebs (*illa turbo*): *scis quanta sit manus, quanta concordia, quantum valeat in contionibus*. Concerning the annual Jewish Temple tax to Jerusalem, Flaccus had acted correctly as propraetor in Asia, *resistere huic barbarae superstitioni*.[61] This accusation is expanded on in the following passage:

> *Suaquique civitati religio, Leli, est, nostra nobis. Stantibus Hierosolymis pacatisque Iudaeis tamen istrorum religio a splendore huius imperii, gravitate nominis nostri, maiorum institutis abhorrebat, nunc hoc vero hoc magis, quod illa gens quid de nostro imperio sentiret ostendit armis; quam cara dis immortalibus esse docuit, quod est victa, quod elocata, quod serva facta.*[62]

It is hardly possible to put Rome's relentless intellectual-cultural rejection of Judaism in a more poignant and offending way. Indeed, Cicero seems to diagnose something like a clash of religions, which however Rome had already oversome with Pompey.

The writers we will now look at are all connected with Rome, irrespective of their language: Strabo, Horace, Ovid, Pompeius Trogus, Seneca, Petronius, Quintilian and Martial. Strabo of Amasia (64 BC - 20s of the 1st century) wrote 43 books of the Historica Hypomnemata

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[59] *De provinciis consularibus* 5.10 (Stern, 1976, No.70).

[60] *Pro Flacco* 28.66-69 (Stern, 1976, No. 68).

[61] See 28.68 concerning Jerusalem: *in tam suspiciosa et maledica civitati.*

[62] Once again the slavery motif (after the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey many Jewish slaves were brought to Rome).

about the period between 167-37 BC, as well as the Geographica. Like Polybius and Nicolaus of Damascus, Josephus calls Strabo one of the *multi et digni conscriptores,* who deemed the raid of the Temple in Jerusalem through Antiochus Epiphanes an unjust action and reported that Antiochus did not find anything unlawful in the Temple.[63] Of particular interest is the passage in *Antiquitates* 14.117f., where Josephus quotes Strabo's text describing the Alexandrian diaspora without any critical reference and mentions the descent of the Jews from Egypt without all the negative aspects we have found in Manetho, Apollonius Molon and Apion where leprosy and other diseases as well as crimes were given as reasons for their expulsion from Egypt.[64]

In Strabo's *Geographica* 16.2,34-46 we find the second passage on Jews, which has philological questions in store for us upon which I must comment briefly. This text by Strabo is often traced back to Poseidonius in scholarly literature.[65] According to Josephus, as mentioned above, the philosopher Poseidonius was critical of the Jews. Josephus mentions him in the same breath as Manetho, Apollonius Molon and Apion. We have already looked at the only passage preserved in Josephus that reveals criticism of Jews.[66] However, Josephus does not quote Poseidonius, so that it remains unclear whether Josephus knew the writings of Poseidonius. In the work of Strabo, the only reference to Poseidonius is to be found in Paragraph 43 in connection with the production of asphalt near the Dead Sea: the residents are magicians. This is the same negative note we have found in connection with Poseidonius before. So, from my point of view, we cannot be sure about the source of Strabo's text.

Let me now comment on the text itself. The passage on Jews in Strabo is structured as follows: *situs - origo - mores - historia - situs - historia.*[67] Its tendency is explicitly positive. Moses, the descent of Israel and the foundation of Jerusalem as well as the main features of religion

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[63] Jos., c. Ap. 2.83f. From *Hypomnemata.* See also *ant. Iud.* 14.11-113, where Josephus once again notes Strabo's historical fairness (see also 14.68,114).

[64] Manetho, see Jos., c. Ap. 1.229.

[65] See the bibliographical references in Bloch, 2002, 42 no. 61. However, Stern, 1976, is not included there.

[66] Jos., c. Ap. 2.79.

[67] Bloch, 2002, 50f.

and ethics are presented in a positive light. Criticism only applies to a later stage in history. In line with the "theory of descent" - the older is the better - the text criticizes the degeneration of political and religious customs. In 16.2,37 we read that the descendents of Moses became superstitious and tyrannical. The results were food conventions, circumcision and troubles with bands of robbers - the latter accusation constitutes a novelty.[68]

The poets Horace and Ovid I will only mention in passing. Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65-8 BC) restricts himself to short topical allusions in his *Sermones*. Jews are circumcised and keep the Sabbath.[69] They are gullible.[70] They look for adherents.[71] In the works of Horace we notice the absence of any criticism or debate. His tone is characterized by - often arrogant - mockery. The same is true for the reference to the Sabbath in Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC-8 AD).[72] For Ovid Sabbath is an identity-marker, no more, no less.

The first passage on Jews in Latin is from the historian Pompeius Trogus (end of the 1st century BC - beginning of the 1st century AD) from Gaul. Excerpts from his work *Historiae Philippicae* are preserved in the *Epitome* and the *Prologues* of Justin.[73] R. Bloch has analysed this passage and elicited the following structure: *origo - mores - situs - historia*. It is evident that the historical interest is prevalent in this passage, while - unlike Strabo - Trogus neglects the ethnographical aspect. I will leave out the historical difference that the Jews came from Damascus. Very interesting, however, is the fact that the story about leprosy is reported without critical or reproachful accentuation. Of great importance for Trogus' account is the expulsion from Egypt, for this circumstance becomes something like a *raison d' être* for Judaism:

> And as they remembered that they were expelled from Egypt, because of the fear of contagion, they took care not to live together with aliens, so that they would not rouse the hatred of

[68] See Pompeius Trogus, *Historiae Philippicae*, Prologus XXXIX no. 138.

[69] Sermones 1.9,60f. Stern 1976, 323-327.

[70] Sermones 1.5,96f.

[71] Sermones 1.4,139f. Concerning the problem of proselytes see PRE.S 9 (1962), 1248f.

[72] Ov., *ars*. 1.141 und 413f. Stern, 1976, 347-349.

[73] See Stern, 1976, 332f. and Bloch, 2002, 54-63.

> the residents for the same reason yet again. Although it had come into existence for a certain reason, it gradually developed into a religious law.[74]

Here we notice the absence of any hint of critical intent. In fact the Jewish characteristic of 'being alien' and their 'setting themselves apart' from the 'others' obtains a historically coherent explanation. Hence we can conclude that the Jewish otherness is regarded as a historical and ethnic fact, which can either be interpreted in a critical and negative or in a historical and neutral way.

The prosaic presentation of Pompeius Trogus, which does not reveal any personal interests, contrasts strongly to the polemics of Apion.[75] Apion (1st half of the 1st century AD), who was a grammarian and lexicographer, a citizen of Alexandria and head of the Alexandrian school of grammarians, authored a work on the history of Egypt. He was a teacher in Rome at the time of Tiberius and Claudius and represented the Greeks of Alexandria in the embassy to Caligula, i.e. he was one of Philo's adversaries. Clemens Alexandrinus claims that Apion wrote a pamphlet against the Jews[76] in a highly polemical tone - if so, it will have been the first of its kind. Yet, the text in question should probably be identified as the anti-Jewish passage in the *Aigyptiaka* (book 3 or 4).[77] Josephus quotes Apion in *Contra Apionem* 2.1-13. Three subject matters are mentioned: Apion's first point of attack is the story about the Jews' suffering from leprosy, which constitutes an ever-present charge from the time of Manetho. In addition, Apion states that the Jews developed tumours in the groin at the time of their exodus from Egypt. Apion links this occurance etymologically with the origin of the Sabbath (*Contra Apionem* 2.20f.).[78] Both charges are of a humiliating and defaming character. The third attack is aimed at the Temple. Here we

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[74] *Et quoniam metu contagionis pulsos se ab Aegypto meminarent, ne eadem causa invisi apud incolas forent, caverunt ne cum peregrinis conviverent; quod ex causa factum paulatim in disciplinam religionemque convertit.*

[75] F. Montanari, *Apion*, in: DNP 1 (1996), 845-847.

[76] Clem., str. 1.21.

[77] C.f. Stern, 1976, 389 (Eus., p.e. 10.10).

[78] Disease of the groin = Egyptian sabbatosis.

find an accumulation of charges with explicitly defaming intentions: the ass's head in the Temple, human sacrifices in the Temple, and in this connection the claim of anthropophagy.[79] In general, Apion reproaches the Jews for not worshipping the same gods as the Alexandrians.[80] Among the standard charges we find that Jews have neither sensible laws nor sensible worship. They do not form a nation but have always been slaves - this we can already find in Cicero. They have not produced any men of genius, i.e. grand inventors.[81] They sacrifice animals. Other mentions are the identity markers of abstention from pork and circumcision. It becomes evident, that Apion has collected all generally known anti-Jewish charges and intensifies them to become even more poignant, insulting and derogatory in his presentation. This can be seen for instance in his claim that the human being who was assumed to be held captive in the Temple at all times in order to be slaughtered and eaten in the context of a sacrificial feast, always was to be a Greek. He adds that the Jews always swore an oath against the Greeks on these occasions (*iusiurandum fare [...], ut inimicitias contra Graecos haberent*).[82] This mirrors the clash of civilisations between the Greek, the Egyptian, and the Jewish population in Roman Alexandria.[83]

The writers Seneca, Petronius, Quintilian, Juvenal and Martial stand in line with Horace and Ovid. Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4/1 BC-65 AD), educator of Nero and Paul's contemporary and co-citizen in the last years of their lives, regarded the presence of Jews in Rome and in the western part of the Roman Empire as a provoca-

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[79] Jos., c. Ap. 2.89,91-96. See above note 28. Josephus' text is discussed in J.M.G. Barclay, *Flavius Josepus. Translation and Commentary. 10 Against Apion.* Leiden, 2007, 217-220. For the assault of the ass-head see Barclay Appendix 4: *The Judeans and the Ass*, 350-352; Bickerman, 1980 (no. 28).

[80] Jos., c. Ap. 2.65.

[81] See above no. 50.

[82] Jos., c. Ap. 2.95.

[83] Since Manetho. See also G. Damschen, *Lysimachos*, in: DNP 7 (1999), 608: Greek mythographer and grammarian, c. 200 B.C. Josephus describes him in *Contra Apionem* as having a particularly anti-Jewish attitude. See Stern, 1976, 382. Lysimachus already mentions the leprosy, considers Moses a charlatan and refers to the Jews as φαυλότατοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

tion, maybe even as a serious challenge. He criticizes the Sabbath, as it seems to him to be a pure waste of time.[84] In connection with this we encounter once again the familiar verbalisations of the sceleratissima gens of the Jews, who are prevalent in all the world, and of the defeated (*victi*) who give laws to the victors (*victoribus leges dederunt*). In his *Satyricon*[85] Petronius Arbiter (1st century AD) criticizes the typical Jewish identity markers: circumcision, Sabbath and the abstention from pork; the latter point is put polemically and satirically in the form of a request that Jews should worship their *porcinum numen*. Similar generalized utterances, yet of an uninterested kind, we find with *Juvenal* (60-130 AD), who once again critically mentions the Sabbath and the abstention from pork, but who also criticizes the Jewish migration to Rome - at the time of Josephus, that is after the Jewish War.[86] In Martial's (2nd half of the 1st century) epigrams we find anti-Jewish charges concerning circumcision and the Sabbath.[87] On the other hand, Epictetus (50-125 AD) refers without any criticism whatsoever to the phenomenon of religiously motivated food regulations. As a philosopher, he is only interested in the fact that all these different regulations cannot be correct at the same time.[88]

The problem of food regulations troubled the writers of imperial Rome for a long time. Even Plutarch (1st half of the 1st century - 20s of the 2nd century AD) refers to the problems of τροφή in *Quaestio* 5 of his *Quaestiones Convivales* 4.4,4-6,2 (where he asks whether Jews abstain from pork because they worship pigs or because they reject pigs). But neither here nor in *Quaestio* 6 ("Who is the god of the Jews?") we find a critical attitude towards Judaism. It is rather a quiet discussion in the field of the history of religions, as is characteristic of Plutarch. The same way of handling the subject can be

[84] Aug., civ. 6.11 from Sen., *De superstitione*. Stern, 1976, 431.

[85] Fragment 37.

[86] Saturae 14.96-106. Here the worship of heaven (*numen caeli*), the Jewish law and the secret book of Moses are discussed critically.

[87] *Epigrammata* 7.30 etc. See the commentaries in Stern, 1976, 523f.

[88] Arr., *Diss*. 1.11,13.

found in *De superstitione*, where the Sabbath is presented as a superstitious practice, but entirely without polemics.[89]

Let us now pass over to the most famous Latin text on Judaism: to the passage on Jews in Tacitus. Publius (Gaius) Cornelius Tacitus was born in Gaul in 55 or 56 AD.[90] He held the sequential order of public offices, served as proconsul of the province of Asia in 112-114 AD and probably died in 120 AD. His main work, *Historiae*, comprises the historical events of the years 69-96 AD. Only books 1-4 and parts of book 5 have been preserved. Tacitus' so-called "excursus on Jews", the fourth of the detailed pagan texts on Jews in antiquity, can be found in book 5.2-13. Tacitus reports Titus' siege of Jerusalem.[91] The following passage reveals Tacitus' claim for a historiographical presentation: *sed quoniam famosae urbis supremum diem tradituri sumus, congruens vedetur primordia eius aperire* (*hist.* 5.2,1). This 5th book of the *Historiae* has been dated to about 100-105 AD - i.e. the final period of Josephus' life, about 30 years after the conquest of Jerusalem.[92]

Bloch presents the structure of Tacitus' passage on Jews as follows:

historia (origo)	5.2 and 3
mores	5.4 and 5
terra	5.6 and 7
historia	5.8 till 13.[93]

In the context of our topic we will look only at the anti-Jewish arguments. Hence we will make an irritating discovery in the text.[94] Tacitus intersperses critical and uncritical aspects. So we find a neutral

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[89] *De sup.* 3 and 8 (Stern, 1976, 549). In *De Stoic. Rep.* 38 (Stern, 1976, 550) the belief in God of the Jews and Syrians is referred to as superstition. In Quaestio 6, however, Plutarch uses analogy and etymology in his attempt to understand the Jewish belief in God.

[90] See Bloch, 2002, 67f.

[91] The report of the conquest has not come down to us.

[92] Bloch, 2002, 129.

[93] Bloch, 2002, 113.

[94] See Bloch, 2002, 65-67 and for Tertullian, see Bloch, 2002, 188f.

depiction of the expulsion from Egypt because of an epidemic in the *origo*-passage (5.2 and 3). At the same time, however, he talks about the *genus hominum invisum deis* (3.1). In the passage about the *mores* (5.4 and 5) there are no polemical accusations to be found in connection with Moses, but all the topical charges against the Mosaic law are assembled. The *Torah* is said to contain *novos ritus contra-riosque ceteris mortalibus*. Bloch demonstrates that the common topos of the Jews 'being alien' or 'being different' is enhanced through the motif of the 'inverted world' (*verkehrte Welt*).[95] What 'we' consider to be profane, the Jews consider to be holy, and they deem profane what we deem holy (*sacer et profanus* 4.1). Tacitus maintains this conviction on the basis of the Egyptian-Greek anti-Jewish polemics, according to which the Jews are averse to the holy animals of Egypt. He associates the Jewish abstention from pork with the story of their suffering from leprosy: pigs are being connected with leprosy. Of great interest is Tacitus' remark concerning the topical charge of worshipping an ass. The following aetiology is once again free from criticism and polemics and could for all intents and purposes have been taken from a pro-Jewish source.[96] Accordingly, Tacitus avoids any criticism of Jewish fasting rituals, but reproaches the Jews for their idleness on the Sabbath. His final judgement as regards the Jewish rituals is uncritical: *hi ritus quoque modo inducti antiquitate defenduntur* (5.1a).

A quite different tendency can be noted in the same sentence from 5.1b onwards. Now Tacitus detects perversion in all matters: *cetera instituta, sinistra foeda, pravitate valuere*. Only a few lines later, he accuses the Jews of "hatred against others" (*adversus omnis hostile odium*), while they show solidarity towards each other. This applies to food regulations as well as sexuality. He criticises circumcision. Moreover, Tacitus accuses Jewish men of sexual exorbitance. In 5.2 we read: *nec quicquam prius imbuuntur quam contemnere deos, exuere patriam, parentes, liberos, fratres vilia habere*. This chain of polemical stereotypes does not have a definitive association with Judaism. *Tacitus* does not even bother to construct a link. The same is true for

[95] Bloch, 2002, 170-176.

[96] Bloch, 2002, 89 suggests a *Spottgeschichte*, with which Tacitus was presented in one of his sources (89). Tacitus himself, however, reports without any polemical tendency.

the following generalized verbalizations: *Iudaeorum mos absurdus sordidusque* (5.5), they are a *taeterrima gens* (8.2), they practice *superstitio* (8.3) and are a *gens superstitioni obnoxia, religionibus adversa* (13.1). Besides, Tacitus describes Jewish monotheism in remarkably adequate words (5.4), but without any factual interest and without comment. He does not even bother to level the antagonism between the overtly conflicting statements that Jews worship an ass's head and that Pompey found the Temple empty.[97]

Reviewing what we have said about Tacitus, it becomes obvious that Tacitus did not have any factual interest in Judaism in terms of religion. His intention is to provide his readers with well-structured traditional background information on the history, the country and the people when he presents the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus. He does not aim to look into the ethnographical or factual subject matters concerning this species of barbarians. This explains the abovementioned combination of critical and uncritical elements. Tacitus is not concerned with factual criticism. From his Roman point of view - and there is only the Roman point of view - Jews are of an alien character to such a degree that factual criticism of their religion and way of life is superfluous. Bloch[98] registers a certain improvement of ethnographical interest in Jewish matters after 70 AD, but at the same time he stresses:

> Von Seiten der literarisch-rhetorisch Gebildeten Roms (der literati), zu denen Tacitus gehörte, wurde [...] nichts unternommen, die tradierten Klischees auf einen neuen Forschungsstand zu bringen.[99]

Even if we assume that the irregularities of the tendencies in Tacitus' presentation of Judaism can be traced back to his use of literary sources,[100] this will make no difference to the fact that the text dis-

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[97] 9.1 and 4.2.

[98] Bloch, 2002, 176-185.

[99] Bloch, 2002, 179.

[100] This is the thesis of an unpublished paper presented by Prof. S. Koster, Classical Department of University of Erlangen, in the context of a seminar on Jerusalem in

plays the typical view of the uninterested Roman elite. And Bloch is right in saying:

> Die verzweifelten Korrekturen des Josephus, wie sie vor allem in dessen apologetischer Schrift Contra Apionem zum Ausdruck kommen, stießen auf kein Gehör.[101]

In general Tacitus represents the indifferent view of the Roman aristocracy on the Jews as a certain kind of eastern barbarians.

3. Conclusions

At this point we meet with the tragic aspect of our examination of the criticism of Judaism in Greek and Roman literature. At the end of at least four centuries in which Greek and Roman ethnography and historiography have taken notice of Judaism, Tacitus discloses that there had not been any genuine literary debate on the basis of factual interest or an exchange of arguments. The city of Rome, where Josephus wrote his works of historiography for the Flavian emperors and attempted to defend Judaism with historical and factual arguments, was also the place, where - at the same time - Tacitus' passage on Judaism was written. This text expresses the Roman point of view exclusively. Jews are considered to be barbarians and only barbarians, and even more: the worst of them.[102] It is not possible to enter into dialogue with Jews, but only to take notice of them through a more or less uninterested perception of the alien from one's own perspective.

At the beginning of this contribution I stressed the point that perception operates with criteria. Tacitus names the central criterion with disarming directness: it is *nos*, and to clarify this: it is exclusively *nos*. This criterion applies to both religion and customs. It is absolutely tight and allows neither space for real criticism nor for

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the winter term 2005 / 2006. Koster presumes a pro-Jewish source, which he expects to be a Jewish Latin verse epic.

[101] Bloch , 2002, 179f.

[102] Tacitus does not speak of *slaves* when referring to Jews. Here he takes up the Greek charge that Jews are βάρβαροι (see Stern, 1984, 156, select index of Greek words and phrases).

the interaction of polemical and apologetical dialogue. *Nos* generates the state of "being different", but not as a mere possible option for Romans, but as an impossibility.

This *nos* constructs an *in-group*. And here we find the reason why neither Josephus[103] nor Philo were able to find literary partners for a critical dialogue on Judaism. This becomes evident by the fact that their works were passed on solely in the Christian tradition. Greco-Roman literature lacks a sophisticated criticism of Judaism which would surpass the perception of otherness - the verdict of 'you are different' ending exclusively in a chain of charges. Thus I come to the conclusion that historically the perception of the otherness of Judaism remained the dominant reaction in literature. Within the scope of this paper we cannot find a satisfying answer to the question of whether this fact was to have an impact on the possible emergence of pagan anti-Semitism. I only want to suggest several potential answers. The fundamental distance separating Greco-Roman writers from Judaism can be interpreted as their overreaching perception of otherness. We could now associate this with pogroms against the Jewish people in antiquity or at least with the attempt to expel Jews from Jerusalem for good. However, the factual disinterest of Greco-Roman writers concerning Judaism seems so strong that we cannot really speak of anti-Jewish tendencies in Greco-Roman literature.[104]

In retrospect, we realize that there is only one small group of authors who perhaps could have had something like a specific anti-Jewish literary attitude, namely Manetho, Apollonius Molon, and Apion - those authors who were more or less influenced by the polemic narratives on the Jewish origins and their Temple cult. In these topics we notice a psychological animosity towards Jews which surpasses the Roman indifference. In the eyes of Manetho, Molon, and Apion the Jews are not only aliens or barbarians, but they are severe enemies both in terms of their religion and their culture. The critics are changing to open slander which is a token of fear and even hatred, put into the narrative of anthropophagy,

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[103] For this topic cf. the contributions in: L.H. Feldman / J.R. Levison (eds.), *Josephus' Contra Apionem. Studies in its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek*, AGJU 34, Leiden 1996.

[104] See B. Schaller, *Antisemitismus* 3, in: [4]RGG 1 (1998), 558f.

Josephus red in Apion's *Aigyptiaka.* The reason for this hatred may be found in the situation of antipathy resulting from the closed and often hostile environment of Alexandria where Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and Jews lived together.[105]

I began by defining criticism as a way of empathy that may lead to rejection and even hatred. We find both in our sources. But the prevailing mode is the indifference which assumes that Jews are barbarians, especially bad ones, and that they are and will remain aliens. We do not have texts indicating that anybody was interested in changing this by means of a critical discussion. When Josephus wrote his *Apologia* there was no pagan author who would have been interested in debating his work. We observe an *in group* mentality on the side of the leading Roman authors, inspired by their excessive love to a mythological as well as a political Rome that is understood not only in providing the leading, but also the only possible culture. In this conception there is no place for foreign cultural claims. John M.G. Barclay puts it like this:

> The recycling and promotion of old Egyptian stories in first-century Rome [...] suggest a political attempt to discredit Judeans, an attempt which, to judge from Tacitus, successfully sowed into the minds of the Roman elite derogatory perceptions of Judean origins and Judean national characteristics. Josephus' reply represents a counter-offensive, which defends Judean honor by the defamation and ridicule of his 'Egyptian' opposition. In a capital city where currents of Egytian and Judean culture won both interest and disdain, our segment represents the competition for cultural power by two nations, both subordinate to Roman power.[106]

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[105] Cf. the Acts of the Alexandrian pagan martyrs: H.A. Musurillo (ed.), *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs: Acta Alexandrinorum*, Oxford 1954. See esp. P.Berol. 8877 from 53 AD: (Acta Isidori rec. C col. 2: the Jews "stir up the entire world"; and "they are not of the same temperament as the Alexandrinians", 25) and P.Oxy. 1242 from before 113 AD (Acta Hermaisci col. 3: "impious Jews" and "So, then, the word 'Jew' is offensive to you?", 48).

[106] Barclay, 2007, 127.

This leads me to my final question: was it in this fashion that Christian authors were the first to debate Judaism seriously? Or is the history of the ancient discourse between Jews and Christians only the next page of the tragedy entitled "The non accomplishing of a real critical and apologetic debate on Judaism in antiquity"?

Main Topics in Early Christian Apologetics

Anders-Christian Jacobsen

1. Introduction

Based on a selection of apologetic texts I will give examples of 'main topics in early Christian apologetics'. I define 'main topics' as topics that are discussed several times in early Christian apologetic texts. I will deal with topics such as accusations of atheism, accusations of not taking part in the cult of the emperor; accusations against Christianity for being a new religion without tradition, critique of the Christian's ethical standard - and the Christian's defence against such accusations.

From there I will go on to discus the argumentative strategies employed by the apologists themselves in the apologetic texts. These can tell us something important about the aims and the audiences of the apologists and their treatises.

I will, however, neither try to define who we can call apologists, nor what kind of texts we can classify as apologies. I merely note that there were probably quite a few apologists, and there were certainly more than those who have written so called 'apologies'. The question of genre is a main issue in Anders Klostergaard Petersen's essay in this volume. I will restrict myself to examples from those writings which - since Eusebius (Eus., h.e. 4.8,13; 17.1; 26.1) - have been included in the 'canon' of apologies; that is for example Aristides; Athenagoras; Justin; Origen; Tatian and Tertullian - all except Origen[1] from the second century.

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[1] Celsus' treatise against the Christians, *Alethes logos*, which Origen answers in his *Contra Celsum* was probably written in the last decades of the second century. Thus Origen also deals with accusations raised against the Christians in the second century.

2. Main Topics in Early Christian Apologetics

2.1. Atheism

According to the apologists from the second and third century AD one of the most widespread accusations against the Christians was the charge of atheism. As a consequence of the fact that most Christians did not recognize the Greco-Roman gods as gods and therefore avoided taking part in the local and imperial cults, the Christians were accused of atheism.[2] The consequences of being accused of atheism were much more severe in the second and third century than today. In the second century atheists were considered to place themselves outside of society and to endanger society, because they broke the *Pax Deorum*, which guaranteed the welfare of the society. To be accused of atheism was therefore a very serious charge.

The allegation of the apologists that Christians were accused of atheism is confirmed when we take a look at the texts written by early critics of Christianity. Two accusations figure prominently in the writings of the early critics of Christianity as well as in those of the apologists: 1) The Christians did not take part in the local Greco-Roman cult; 2) The Christians did not honour the emperor as a god. These accusations were often summed up as atheism.

The two charges were clearly formulated in the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan (112 AD).[3] According to Pliny, part of the legal proceedings against the Christians involved instructing them

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[2] A. Wlosok, *Christliche Apologetik gegenüber kaiserliche Politik bis zu Konstantin*, in: H. Frohnes / U.W. Knorr (eds.), *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte. Band I. Die Alte Kirche*, München 1974, 149, describes the charges against the Christians of atheism as one of the most widespread and serious charges against which the apologists had to argue. Wlosok underlines the important connection between the Christians' monotheism, their critique of the pagan polytheism, and the charges of being atheists. As we will see the apologists rejected this connection claiming that monotheism in no way leads to atheism. See also these classical contributions to the theme: A. von Harnack, *Der Vorwurf des Atheismus in den drei ersten Jahrhunderten*, TU 28.4, Leipzig 1905; W. Nestle, *Atheismus*, in: RAC 1 (1950), 866-870.

[3] J. Engberg, *Impulsore Chresto. Opposition to Christianity in the Roman Empire c. 50-250 AD*, ECCA 2, Berlin 2007, 173-206, carefully evaluates the scholarly discussions of what can be learnt about the relations between the Roman authorities and the Christians from the letters of Pliny and Trajan. See further the standard commen-

to pray and sacrifice to the gods and to the image of the emperor: and further they were told to curse Christ:

> Among these (those whose names are mentioned in an anonymous pamphlet) I considered that I should dismiss any who denied that they were or ever had been Christians when they had repeated after me a formula of invocation to the goods and had made offerings of wine and incense to your statue (which I had ordered to be brought into the court for this propose along with the images of the gods), and furthermore had reviled the name of Christ: none of which things, I understand, any genuine Christian can be induced to do. (Plin., ep. 10.96,5).[4]

This is at least an indirect indication that Christians were accused of not taking part in the cults allowing them to be considered to be atheists.

Later on in his letter to Trajan (Plin., ep. 10.96f.), Pliny claimed that attempts to diminish and stop the growth of Christianity lead to the re-establishment and flourishing of the traditional Greco-Roman cults. It is thus clear that the conflict between Christians and the non-Christian authorities and population was about religious and cultic praxis, among other things. In Pliny's letter, these charges are not summed up in a charge for atheism. Joseph J. Walsh in his article *On Christian Atheism*[5] therefore claims that Pliny and other early critics of Christianity did not bring forward any accusation against the Christians of being atheists.[6] According to Walsh, this

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tary to the letters of Pliny: A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny. A Historical and Social Commentary*, Oxford 1966.

[4] *Qui negabant esse se Christianos aut fuisse, cum praeeunte me deos adpellarent et imagini tuae, quam propter hoc iusseram cum simulacris numinum adferri, ture ac vino supplicarent, praeterae maledicerent Christo, quorum nihil cogi posse dicantur, qui sunt re vera Christiani, dimittendos esse putavi.* The Latin text and the English translation is from B. Radice, *Pliny. Letter and Panegyricus*, Cambridge Mass. 1969.

[5] J. J. Walsh, *On Christian Atheism*, in: VigChr 45 (1991), 255-277.

[6] According to Walsh, 1991, 258f., Pliny was not concerned about the Christian's atheism, and according to Walsh the hints in his letter about a renewed use of pagan

charge did not emerge before the time of Marcus Aurelius.[7] Walsh's observation is probably correct as long as we think of explicit charges of atheism. However, I find it obvious that Pliny found that one of the fundamental problems with Christians was that they would not take part in the Greco-Roman cults, because they did not accept the Greco-Roman gods as gods.[8]

From the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD) and onwards it is obvious that the charge of atheism was explicit and outspoken.[9] In Eusebius' Church History we find a quotation from a letter of the emperor Marcus Aurelius to the Council of Asia. Marcus Aurelius explained why the council should be hesitant about bringing forward accusations against the Christians:

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temples after his intervention against the Christians does not suggest that Pliny was conscious of the relevance of the accusations that Christianity was atheistic.

[7] The central idea in Walsh essay *On Christian Atheism* is that the accusation of atheism was not raised against the Christians before the time of Marcus Aurelius: "In our pagan sources it is not until the late 170s (Celsus, Lyon etc.) that atheism is clearly discernible as the chief concern of pagans" (Walsh, 1991, 262).

[8] Engberg, 2007, 193-198, reaches the same conclusion cf. the following quotations: "Consequently, already in the year 112, Pliny, the regional Roman authority in Bithynia-Pontus, and Trajan, the central authority in Rome, were entirely aware of the Christians' aversion towards worshipping the Roman gods and cursing Christ. Consequently, the idea of ungodliness was strongly associated with the Christian *nomen*" (Engberg, 2007, 194). "No, there was no doubt in Pliny's mind. This was not just a question of Christians being disinterested in the gods; they openly defied the gods, in the same manner that they defied him. This is why Pliny perceived Christians as ungodly, even though he never uses the Greek term ἄθεος" (Engberg, 2007, 196).

[9] Wlosok, 1974, 152-154, rightly says that the increased critique of the Christians under Marcus Aurelius was a consequence of the grave difficulties (wars, natural disasters, famine etc.) facing the empire during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. This situation led to criticism and persecution of Christians as Marcus Aurelius and very many others in the empire reasoned that the problems were an expression of the wrath of the Gods. The cult had not been properly conducted and thus the Gods were angry (cf. the *pax Deorum*). According to Wlosok, it was easy and obvious to blame the increased number of Christians for this infringement of the *pax Deorum*.

> The Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus Armenicus Pontifex Maximus, holding Tribunician Power the fifteenth time, Consul the third, to the Council of Asia, greeting. I know that the gods also take care that such persons should not go undetected: they are far more likely to punish those who will not worship them than you are. You get them into serious trouble by your accusations of atheism, and thereby strengthen their existing determination: and if accused they would choose apparent death rather than life, for the sake of their own god. And so they are the real winners, when they part with their lives rather than agree to carry out our commands. (Eus., h.e. 4.13,1-3).[10]

It is clear from the passage quoted that Marcus Aurelius did not propose this strategy out of any kind of sympathy towards the Christians. For our theme, the most important aspect is that Christians explicitly are accused of atheism. Atheism was thus an explicit charge against the Christians at the time of Marcus Aurelius. As already noted, by no means does this exclude the possibility that this accusation was also directly or indirectly raised against the Christians before the time of Marcus Aurelius.

Common to these charges is the underlying accusation that Christians destabilised local societies as well as the empire as a whole. Christians did not meet their religious and social obligations, a negligence which could cause the wrath and bring on the punishment of

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[10] Αὐτοκράτωρ Καῖσαρ Μάρκος Αὐρήλιος Ἀντωνῖνος Σεβαστός, Ἀρμένιος, ἀρχιερεὺς μέγιστος, δημαρχικῆς ἐξουσίας τὸ πέμπτον καὶ τὸ δέκατον, ὕπατος τὸ τρίτον, τῷ κοινῷ τῆς Ἀσίας χαίρειν. ἐγὼ μὲν οἶδ' ὅτι καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπιμελές ἐστι μὴ λανθάνειν τοὺς τοιούτους· πολὺ γὰρ μᾶλλον ἐκεῖνοι κολάσαιεν ἂν τοὺς μὴ βουλομένους αὐτοῖς προσκυνεῖν ἢ ὑμεῖς. οὓς εἰς ταραχὴν ἐμβάλλετε, βεβαιοῦντες τὴν γνώμην αὐτῶν ἥνπερ ἔχουσιν, ὡς ἀθέων κατηγοροῦντες· εἴη δ' ἂν κἀκείνοις αἱρετὸν τῷ δοκεῖν κατηγορουμένοις τεθνάναι μᾶλλον ἢ ζῆν ὑπὲρ τοῦ οἰκείου θεοῦ· ὅθεν καὶ νικῶσι, προϊέμενοι τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχὰς ἥπερ πειθόμενοι οἷς ἀξιοῦτε πράττειν αὐτούς. The English translation is from G.A. Williamson / A. Louth (eds.), *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine.* London 1989.

the gods.[11] Facing these charges, the second century apologists defended Christianity in different ways. In his first apology (Just., 1 apol. 3-5) Justin argued that Christians should not be condemned just because of the 'name', this means not just because they were called, or called themselves, Christians. The authorities should investigate the manners of the Christians in order to be able to decide whether these deeds were good or bad. According to Justin, the authorities would find that Christians acted properly and to the benefit of society. Following up this argument, Justin said in chapter 6 that Christians, because they rejected the evil daemons who are responsible for men's bad lives and acts, were called atheist:

> Hence are we called atheists. And we confess that we are atheists, so far as gods of this sort are concerned, but not with respect to the most true God, the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues, who is free from all impurity. But both Him, and the Son (who came forth from Him and taught us these things, and the host of the other good angels who follow and are made like to Him), and the prophetic Spirit, we worship and adore, honouring them in reason and truth, and declaring without grudging to every one who wishes to learn, as we have been taught. (Just., 1 apol. 6.1f.).[12]

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[11] Cf. S. Benko, *Pagan Criticism of Christianity during the first two Centuries*, in: ANWR 2.23,2 (1980), 1055-1118.

[12] Ἔνθεν δὲ καὶ ἄθεοι κεκλήμεθα· καὶ ὁμολογοῦμεν τῶν τοιούτων νομιζομένων θεῶν ἄθεοι εἶναι, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ τοῦ ἀληθεστάτου καὶ πατρὸς δικαιοσύνης καὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀρετῶν, ἀνεπιμίκτου τε κακίας θεοῦ· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνόν τε καὶ τὸν παρ' αὐτοῦ υἱόν, ἐλθόντα καὶ διδάξαντα ἡμᾶς ταῦτα, καὶ τὸν τῶν αὐτῷ ἑπομένων καὶ ἐξομοιουμένων ἀγαθῶν ἀγγέλων στρατόν, πνεῦμά τε τὸ προφητικὸν σεβόμεθα καὶ προσκυνοῦμεν, λόγῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ τιμῶντες καὶ παντὶ βουλομένῳ μαθεῖν, ὡς ἐδιδάχθημεν, ἀφθόνως παραδιδόντες. The Greek text is quoted after G. Krüger (ed.), *Die Apologien Justins des Märtyrers*, Tübingen 1915. The English translation is (except from one minor correction made by me) from A. Roberts / J. Donaldson / A.C. Coxe (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers 1*, Edinburgh 1989.

According to Justin, there was a clear link between the Christian's rejection of the daemons as gods and the charge of atheism and a link from this charge of atheism to the actual convictions of Christians without any preceding investigations. Justin thus asked the authorities to look at the deeds and lives of the Christians and not just reject the Christians because of the 'name' and fact that Christians refused to worship daemons (cf. Just., 1. apol. 13; 46).

The refutation of this charge of atheism plays a prominent part in the *Legatio* of Athenagoras.[13] Athenagoras argued against this charge in different ways. First he made it clear that the reason for the refusal of the Christians to take part in the local and imperial cults was not that they were atheists, but that they were monotheists (Athenag., leg. 2-12). According to Athenagoras, this made a very important difference, because it showed that Christians acknowledged a transcendent and sustaining power. Thus, according to Athenagoras, the difference between Christians and non-Christians was not that the Christians rejected a transcendent and sustaining power while non-Christians acknowledged it. The difference lay in defining this power. According to the Greeks and Romans, there are many goods; according to the Christians there is only one true God.

In the first part of his treatise where he argued that the Christians are monotheists Athenagoras used positive as well as negative arguments. Of course, he rejected the accusations that the Christians were atheists (Athenag., leg. 4.1f.), but he devoted more space and energy to his account of the Christian understanding of God as one (Athenag., leg. 7-12). He went so deeply into the details that he explained, how the one God can have a son, who is also God (Athenag., leg. 10.2-5). In this passage we find some of the very first considerations about a trinitarian understanding of God. Why did Athenagoras explain Christian theology in such detail? Writing to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus he says:

> Do not be surprised that I go through our teaching in detail. I am making my points carefully to prevent you from being carried away by low and irrational opinion and to put you in a position to know the truth. For we can persuade you that

[13] The discussion of this accusation is the theme of chapters 2-30.

> you are not dealing with atheists precisely through the doctrines which we hold - doctrines not man-made but ordained and taught by God. (Athenag., leg. 11.1f.).[14]

According to this quotation Athenagoras' intention was to prevent his addressees - the emperors - from being led astray by false opinions about Christian beliefs. And further he claimed that in this way he was able to prove that Christians were not atheists. Is this to be understood as a straightforward proposition: Athenagoras would teach the emperors about Christianity and then they would stop persecuting the Christians? This could be a part of the answer, but probably not the whole answer. The intention of Athenagoras was most likely broader. It is very easy to imagine that Athenagoras used these positive arguments to convince non-Christian readers in general about the truth and the positive intentions of Christianity in relation to the stability and welfare of the society. The aim of the apology was thus not only defensive but also offensive and protreptic.

Tertullian rejected the accusations of atheism in apol. 10-27. He confirmed that the charge of atheism was the most important charge against the Christians (Tert., apol. 10.1). He gave a very short answer to the question why the Christians did not worship the gods: it was because the gods of the Greeks and the Romans according to the Christians were not gods at all:

> 'You do not worship the gods,' you say; 'and you do not offer sacrifices for the emperors.' Well, we do not offer sacrifice for others, for the same reason that we do not for ourselves, - namely, that your gods are not at all the objects of our worship. So we are accused of sacrilege and treason. This is the chief ground of the charge against us - nay, it

[14] Εἰ δὲ ἀκριβῶς διέξειμι τὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς λόγον, μὴ θαυμάσητε. ἵνα γὰρ μὴ τῇ κοινῇ καὶ ἀλόγῳ συναποφέρησθε γνώμῃ, ἔχητε δὲ τἀληθές εἰδέναι, ἀκριβολογοῦμαι. ἐπεὶ καὶ δι' αὐτῶν τῶν δογμάτων οἷς προσέχομεν, οὐκ ἀνθρωπικοῖς οὖσιν, ἀλλὰ θεοφάτοις καὶ θεοδιδάκτοις, πεῖσαι ὑμᾶς, μὴ ὡς περὶ ἀθέων ἔχειν δυνάμεθα. The Greek text as well as the English translation is from W.R. Schoedel (ed.), *Athenagoras. Legatio and De Resurrectione*, Oxford 1972.

> is the sum-total of our offending; and it is worthy then of being inquired into, if neither prejudice nor injustice be the judge, the one of which has no idea of discovering the truth, and the other simply and at once rejects it. We do not worship your gods, because we know that there are no such beings. This, therefore, is what you should do: you should call on us to demonstrate their non-existence, and thereby prove that they have no claim to adoration; for only if your gods were truly so, would there be any obligation to render divine homage to them. And punishment even were due to Christians, if it were made plain that those to whom they refused all worship were indeed divine. (Tert., apol. 10.1f.)[15]

In apol. 10-16 Tertullian argued for this rejection of the gods. He tried for example to show that all the gods were invented by humans such as when dead people were deified (Tert., apol. 11). He claimed that the images of the gods were handicrafts made of wood or other materials. At a certain time a material substance could be formed as an image of a god or goddess, later on it could be redesigned as a spoon or a pot used for cooking (Tert., apol. 12). As a third example Tertullian criticised the Roman and Greek gods because they are connected with many kinds of violence for example the violence going on in arenas (Tert., apol. 15).

Like Athenagoras before him, Tertullian was not content with this negative critique of the pagan gods. Therefore, he went on to describe positively some of the main points of Christianity. In apol. 21 we find a description of Christ as God. In this description of Christ it was important for Tertullian to underline how Christian belief in Christ as God was related to the Jewish belief in the Mes-

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[15] *'Deos', inquitis, 'non colitis et pro imperatoribus sacrificia non penditis.' Sequitur, ut eadem ratione pro aliis non sacrificemus, qu[i]a nec pro nobis ipsis, semel deos non colendo. Itaque sacrilegii et maiestatis rei convenimur. Summa haec causa, immo tota est et utique digna cognosci, si non praesumptio aut iniquitas iudicet, altera quae desperat, altera quae recusat veritatem. Deos vestros colere desinimus, ex quo illos non esse cognoscimus. Hoc igitur exigere debetis, uti probemus non esse illos deos et idcirco non colendos, quia tunc demum coli debuissent, si dei fuissent. Tunc et Christiani puniendi, si, quos non colerent, quia putarent non esse, constaret illos deos esse.*

siah; how the Christ could be said to be the son of God without being a product of God's sexual escapades as was the case with the offspring of the Greek and Roman gods. Even if Tertullian was not as explicit as Athenagoras in his positive descriptions of Christianity, it is obvious that he also felt the need to say something positive about the beliefs of the Christians.

A special aspect of the general charge of atheism directed against the Christians was the specific charge that they did not bring sacrifices to the image of the emperor. It is not quite clear from the apologetic texts what this cult of the emperor was. One part of it was that some emperors were deified after their death. To these emperors one could bring sacrifices as to other gods. Another aspect was the cult of the living emperor. The living emperor could be worshipped as a god or a demigod or the citizens could bring sacrifices to the gods for the sake of the welfare of the emperor.[16]

In Tertullian (Tert., apol. 28-35) it seems as if the charge against the Christians was that they did not bring sacrifices to the gods for the welfare of the emperor (cf. Tert., apol. 28.2). Confronted with this charge Tertullian first asked whether the emperor was dependent on the gods or vice versa. According to Tertullian it was the emperor who maintained the cults. Therefore the gods depended on the emperor. Tertullian criticised the fact that the Christians were forced to take part in this empty cult of the emperor. On the other hand he positively described how the Christians prayed to the true God for the emperor (Tert., apol. 31f.). The Bible orders the Christians to pray for the authorities because the authorities were inaugurated by God himself. Furthermore, the Roman Empire was God's way of postponing the destruction of the world. According to Tertullian, the Christians had no interest in undermining the emperor because he was chosen by God. Therefore the Christians honoured the emperor and prayed for him (Tert., apol. 33).

From what is stated here, we can conclude that, from the beginning of the second century, Christians were accused of being atheists. On the one hand the apologists confirmed that Christians did not worship the Greek and Roman gods or the emperor, because these were not real gods, according to the Christians. On the other hand, the apolo-

[16] Cf. I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Oxford 2002.

gists denied that Christians were atheists, because they believed in, and served, the one true God. The 'political' aim of the apologists was thus to defend the Christians, describing them as loyal citizens of the empire; their 'theological' aim was to defend the Christians, describing their theism. As theists - and not atheists - Christians agreed with their pagan neighbours that God is a transcendent and sustaining power who takes care of men and society - if worshipped in the right way. Theology and politics were thus intimately interconnected.

2.2. Christianity - a new Religion without Tradition

The critics of Christianity also claimed that Christianity was a new religion which broke with existing traditions. This charge was a serious one in a society which - unlike our modern society - honoured tradition and antiquity. That the older was the better was a commonplace at that time among the Greeks. That the 'mos maiorum' must be observed said the Romans. Among many others, Celsus raised this charge of newness against Christianity. Origen's answer to Celsus in *Contra Celsum* 2.1 was that Celsus was mistaken when he claimed that the Jewish Christians had broken off from the Jewish traditions. On the contrary: they still followed these traditions. However, the most common way to claim that Christianity was not a new religion and that the Christians did not break with the old traditions was to claim that Christianity was the true continuation of Judaism and that the Jewish scriptures prophesised about the coming of the Christ and therefore belonged to the Christians. Carrying the argument further in *Contra Celsum*, Origen later tried to demonstrate that the Christian traditions about the creation of the world are older than the traditions of the Greeks. The Christian traditions go back to the Old Testament prophets (Moses) while the Greek traditions only go back to Plato's *Timaeus*, Origen claimed.

In apol. 21, Tertullian claimed that although everyone knows that Christianity dates to the time of Tiberius, it is in fact much older - because Christianity is the true heir of the Old Testament prophecies about the Christ. The Jews failed to recognise Jesus as the Christ. Therefore the Christians have taken their place. Using

similar arguments, the apologists tried to handle charges of being a new religion which breaks with old religious traditions.[17]

2.3. 'Political' Charges and Defences

It is quite clear that charges of atheism had political implications, because, according to Greek and Roman understanding, the proper conduct of the cultic obligations was a precondition for political stability and for the welfare of the community as a whole. In addition to the charges with indirect political consequences, the apologists also defended Christianity against direct political accusations such as charges of political disloyalty and the establishment of secret communities. Further, the apologists criticised the Roman authorities for treating Christians in an illegitimate way when they were accused and convicted only because they confessed to be Christians.

In an analysis of Pliny's correspondence with Trajan, Jakob Engberg[18] has made it clear that Christians in the early second century were convicted and executed because of their confessing to be Christians: Pliny tested their confession, and if the accused stuck to it, they were executed. What is not so clear from the texts of Pliny and Trajan is the answer to the question of why these Romans felt it necessary to execute Christians who stuck to their confession. There are, however, some hints in the texts: as part of the trial Pliny asked the accused to pray to the gods and to bring sacrifices to the images of Trajan and the gods.[19] This shows that the Christians were convicted because the Roman authorities considered them to be representatives of a culpable superstition which led to failing loyalty toward the emperor and the gods.[20] We can thus conclude that the Christian apologists told the truth when they complained that Christians were convicted

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[17] A very detailed discussion of the idea that 'the older is the better' is available in P. Pilhofer, *Presbyteron Kreitton. Der Altersbeweis der jüdischen und christlichen Apologeten und seine Vorgeschichte*, WUNT II 39, Tübingen 1990.

[18] Engberg, 2007, 173-206.

[19] Cf. above note 4.

[20] Cf. J. Engberg, *Fordømmelse, kritik og forundring - samtidige hedenske forfatteres bedømmelse af kristne og kristendom*, in: J. Engberg / A.-C. Jacobsen / J. Ulrich (eds.), *Til forsvar for kristendommen - tidlige kristne apologeter*, Frederiksberg 2006, 291-330 (298-303). Engberg points out that Pliny's demand that the Christians should curse

and executed only 'because of the name' - that is only because they confessed to be Christians.[21] This is, however, only a part of the truth: the Romans felt that the confession of Christians included disloyalty toward the gods and the emperor. In the texts of the apologists we can, in agreement with this, find statements which confirm that the apologists were aware that their critics were connecting some more concrete accusations with the name of the Christians.

In apol. 38-41 Tertullian discussed the charge that Christians were forming secret associations.[22] The Roman political administration and rulers were always on guard against groups which conspired against those in power. It was therefore illegal to form associations without permission from the authorities. The Christian communities had no such permission and were therefore considered to be illegal associations.

Against this charge Tertullian defended the Christians saying that they were criminalized only because they did not want to take part in the normal social and religious life in the society. The Christian communities were not a threat to Roman society and social order. In order to prevent any speculations about what went on in the Christian communities Tertullian gave a description of these communities and their activities: the Christians meet to pray to the one true God; they discussed the Christian scriptures, they sang and they admonished each other to live their lives as Christians. Further the Christians shared everything except their wives; they gave money and food to the poor and they were eating together. It follows that, according to Tertullian, the Christian communities were in no way a menace to society or to the rulers.

Robert Wilken[23] argues that in this passage Tertullian tried to describe the Christian communities as examples of the well-known social and religious associations which were widespread in the Roman Empire in the second century. According to Wilken, Tertul-

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Christ underlines that the reason for convicting the Christians was the destructive influence of the Christian 'superstition' on traditional Greek and Roman religion.

[21] Cf. Tert., apol. 1-3; Athenag., leg. 1; Just., 1 apol. 4.

[22] Cf. Wlosok, 1974, 154f.

[23] R.L. Wilken, *Towards a Social Interpretation of Early Christian Apologetics*, in: ChH 39 (1970), 437-458 (449-456).

lian's aim was to identify the Christian groups with a well-known social phenomenon and to make the Christian communities less provocative, and thus at once less dangerous, and more familiar to the authorities and to other Roman citizens.

As was the case with the Christian communities, many of these associations were not legally recognized by the authorities. Tertullian, however, tried to convince his audience that what happened in the Christian communities was not more 'dangerous' to society than when carpenters or cooks or others met in their associations. The meetings of the Christians even involved ethical and moral training, and in this respect the Christian associations are best compared with philosophical schools of which many were well respected and also recognized by the authorities.

Thus most of the apologists emphasized their loyalty towards society and the authorities in order to avoid suspicions of disloyalty or of being a direct treat to the society and the authorities in power. Tertullian stressed that the Christians prayed for the emperor and the Roman Empire (Tert., apol. 28.2). The same can be seen in many other apologies. Thus Justin (Just., 1. apol. 11) corrected the suspicion that the Christians tried to establish a new earthly kingdom. The kingdom which the Christians awaited is the kingdom of God which does not belong to this world. Later on (Just., 1. apol. 17), Justin claimed that Christians followed the example of their master and therefore paid the taxes which were demanded from them.

By the third century, things seem to have changed. Christianity was better established and at least some Christians seem to have been more self confident. This can be deduced from the question about forming associations. According to Origen (Or., Cels. 1.1) the first main point in Celsus' attacks on Christianity was that Christians made secret associations contrary the laws. To judge from the prominent position Celsus gave to this charge in his attack on Christianity it must have been a very serious charge. In his answer Origen did not deny that the Christians formed associations, nor did he deny that these were illegal and could be a threat to the Roman society. Origen's answer was that Christians lived in a society where the laws were contrary to the divine law. Therefore they were doing the right thing when they abandoned the false laws in order to live according to the divine law. Origen apparently did nothing to

calm down the suspicions against the Christian communities. Later on (Or., Cels. 1.7), he even underlines that the associations of the Christians were not secret. Christianity had become know to almost everyone in the Roman Empire. Perhaps Origen's frankness reflects the growing power of Christianity around 250 AD - a power which Christianity did not have in the second century when most of the early Christian apologists were writing and when Celsus raised his criticism of Christianity.

2.4. Ethical Charges

A fourth kind of charge against the Christians concerned ethical issues. In his letter to Hadrian, Pliny says that some of the accused whom he had questioned had told him that on a certain day in the week (Sunday) the Christians used to meet and eat together - but only ordinary and innocent food (Plin., ep. 10.96,7). Pliny accepted this explanation. It is clear from the way in which Pliny expressed himself that he knew that Christians were accused of cannibalism. It is, however, also clear that Pliny did not find any reason to believe this accusation.

In his *Octavius* Minucius Felix quoted a passage from Fronto's speech against the Christians. In this passage Fronto described how Christians gathered in their community practised incest and other kinds of sexual amoralities.[24] It is evident from these examples that Christians in the second century were confronted with different charges concerning their moral habits, their way of life, and their cultic arrangements. The apologists responded to these charges by denying them; by showing that immorality was widespread in the Greco-Roman tradition and by claiming - on the contrary - that moral standards amongst the Christians were higher than those of any other inhabitants of the empire.

Tertullian dealt with this critique in apol. 7-9. He described the charges of cannibalism and incest in a way which shows that he was acquainted with Fronto's speech against the Christians. Tertullian used several arguments in his defence against the charges. First of all he asked the judges to investigate the charges and prove that they are true. According to Tertullian, an investigation would

[24] Cf. Engberg, 2006, 315-319.

show that the charges were false. He also used irony to refute the charges saying: if you want to know what is going on in the cult of the Christians, you can go and ask the leader of the cult what is required for the ceremony of initiation into the cult. If the charges are true, he will answer the following:

> You must have a child still of tender age, that knows not what it is to die, and can smile under thy knife; bread, too, to collect the gushing blood; in addition to these, candlesticks, and lamps, and dogs - with tid-bits to draw them on to the extinguishing of the lights: Above all things, you will require to bring your mother and your sister with you (Tert., apol. 8.7).[25]

According to Tertullian it would be foolish to believe that such things could take place. Finally (Tert., apol. 9) Tertullian also used the well-known apologetic argument that the Romans themselves did the very things of which they accused the Christians.[26] To underline his point, he listed stories from the Greek and Roman mythological traditions. Tertullian used, however, no positive arguments in this case, but, as we shall see, Athenagoras did.

In chapters 31-36 of the *Legatio*, Athenagoras discussed the same charges of cannibalism and incest. Athenagoras used various arguments to refute these charges: the first argument referred to Christian teaching about eternal life or eternal punishment. The Christians know, Athenagoras said (Athenag., leg. 31.3f.; 36), that they will be punished or rewarded in the life to come according to their works in this life. Therefore they will not commit such crimes. The way in which Athenagoras referred to these eschatological loci could imply that his audience had some knowledge of Christianity. Ideas about judgement and the afterlife were, however, widespread in the second century AD.

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[25] *Infans tibi necessarius adhuc tener, qui nesciat mortem, qui sub cultro tuo rideat; item panis, quo sanguinis iurulentiam colligas; praeterae candelabra et lucernae et canes aliqui et offulae, quae illos ad eversionem luminum extendant; ante omnia cum matre et sorore tua venire debebis.*

[26] Justin uses the same argument against charges of cannibalism and sexual excesses; cf. Just., 2 apol. 12.

In leg. 32-35 Athenagoras continued his defence against the charges of immorality. Firstly, he used the well known apologetic strategy of turning the charges against the accusers themselves. According to Athenagoras, the Greeks should not criticise the Christians for sexual misbehaviour, because their own gods acted immorally. Thus Zeus had children with his mother as well as his daughter, and he was married to his own sister. And in general, Greek gods were notorious for committing incest. The Greeks themselves were known for a promiscuous sexuality and some of them earned money from female as well as male prostitution.

According to Athenagoras, the moral behaviour of the Christians was exactly the opposite of that represented in the accusations of the Greeks, and in fact the true situation was the mirror image of that widely claimed. The Christians have laws which forbid them to look at women with lustful desire (cf. Mt 5:28). The Christians consider each other to be brothers and sisters, parents and children. They protect their 'families' so that their bodies will not be harmed, Said Athenagoras (Athenag., leg. 32.4f.). The Christians only have sexual intercourse with their spouses and only in order to continue the family.[27] There are even Christians who totally abstain from marriage and sexual intercourse in order to come closer to God. Divorce is not allowed for Christians and widows are not allowed to re-marry.

It is obvious that many of these ethical and moral charges against the Christians were connected with the cultic life of the Christians. It seems as if there very many rumours about the Christian cult. These rumours probably stemmed from the non Christians' unfamiliarity with the Christian cult. At least parts of the Christian cult were only open to the baptized. Thus the non Christians only heard about the sharing of blood and flesh, the love between sisters and brothers and so on. These rumours were probably also intentionally misunderstood by some of the enemies of Christianity.

[27] See also Just., 1 apol. 29.1.

3. Apologetic Strategies

When dealing with strategies in apologetic texts, we must differentiate between explicit and implicit strategies. Some authors explicitly describe the strategies which they intend to apply. This is the case in Tertullian's *Apologeticum*: "and I shall not only refute the things which are objected to us, but I shall also retort them on the objectors" (Tert., apol. 4.1).[28] With this sentence Tertullian probably did not intend to reveal the strategy for the whole of his *Apologeticum*, but he uses this strategy in isolated paragraphs treating specific themes. This is e.g. the case in *Apologeticum* 7-9, where he first rejected the accusation that the Christians eat small children and commit incest (Tert., apol. 7f.), and after that accused the Romans of doing exactly these things themselves (Tert., apol. 9).[29]

In Tertullian we also find irony used as rhetorical strategy. For example when in *Apologeticum* 10-16 he criticized the Roman and Greek gods, he very ironically described how the pagan images of the gods were made by craftsmen using all kinds of tools. These craftsmen hurt the gods very badly with their tools, but the gods did not complain about this violence. This is, of course, because the craftsmen in reality worked on a piece of dead wood or stone. Had the images been living gods they would not have put up with this treatment.

It was also typical for the Greek apologists to try to construct alliances with what they considered to be the best parts of the Greek tradition - that is the philosophers. In chapters 18-30 of his *Legatio*, where Athenagoras discussed the use of images and statues in Greek cults, on several occasions, he pointed out Greek philosophers who - like Athenagoras and the Christians - rejected the concept that God has a physical shape (e.g. Athenag., leg. 20.2). In the same part of *Legatio*, we also observe that Athenagoras turned the opinion of the philosophers against the Greek poets whom he considered to be the originators of the idea that the gods have a physical shape (Athenag., leg. 20.1).[30]

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[28] *Nec tantum refutabo quae nobis obiciuntur, sed etiam in ipsos retorquebo [...].*

[29] See further Athenag., leg. 32-35, where Athenagoras turns the charges against the Romans themselves.

[30] It is, however, not the apologists who invent the idea of bringing up the philosophers against the poets; amongst the Greeks themselves, there was already a long

The case was somewhat different among the Latin apologists. Most often they did not enter into alliances with philosophy, and Tertullian was directly hostile towards philosophy. In the passage *Apologeticum* 46-50 he emphasised the difference between Greco-Roman philosophy and Christianity. The Christians are the 'good guys' who know the truth and live morally while the philosophers have gone astray:

> So, then, where is there any likeness between the Christian and the philosopher? Between the disciple of Greece and of heaven? Between the man whose object is fame, and whose object is life? Between the talker and the doer? Between the man who builds up and the man who pulls down? Between the friend and the foe of error? Between one who corrupts the truth, and one who restores and teaches it? Between its chief and its custodian? (Tert., apol. 46.18).[31]

What could be the intention in making such alliances? The apologists could use such alliances to show their readers that parts of the Greek traditions agreed with Christianity in certain respects. Who would be convinced by such an argument? Of course the Greeks with whom the Christians agree. This would mean that the apologists aimed at convincing the philosophically educated Greeks.

In other apologies, we find accounts of how the apologists themselves have converted from Greco-Roman traditions to Christianity. These statements can be very short as is the case in Tertullian's *Apologeticum* or be the theme of the whole treatise as is the case with Minucius Felix' *Octavius*. In a passage where Tertullian, among other things, expounded on Christian eschatology, he said: "Once these things were with us, too, the theme of ridicule. We are of your stock and nature: men are made, not born, Christians" (Tert., apol. 18.4).[32]

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tradition of doing exactly that. This is the *Sitz im Leben* of the philosophical critics of the myths.

[31] *Adeo quid simile philosophus et Christianus, Graeciae discipulus et caeli, famae negotiator et vitae, verborum et factorum operator, et rerum aedificator et destructor, amicus et inimicus erroris, veritatis interpolator et integrator et expressor, et furator eius et custos?*

[32] *Haec et nos risimus aliquando. De vestries sumus: fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani.*

In Tatian we find a more detailed but still brief account of his conversion. Tatian in his *Oratio ad Graecos* (Tat., orat. 24) related that he had searched for the truth in many different cults and rites but had not found it. Then he happened to touch upon the Christian scriptures:

> While I was engaged in serious thought I happened to read some barbarian writings, older by comparison with the doctrines of the Greeks, more divine by comparison with their errors. The outcome was that I was persuaded by these because of the lack of arrogance in the wording, the artlessness of the speakers, the easily intelligible account of the creation of the world, the foreknowledge of the future, the remarkable quality of the precepts and the doctrine of a single ruler of the universe. (Tat., orat. 29.2).[33]

It is obvious that Tatian used his own conversion as an argument in order to convince others that they should also convert to Christianity. Among the things he accentuated were the straightforward arguments in the Christian writings - which in the context of Tatian must be understood as a critique of Greek philosophy. This could suggest that Tatian addressed his treatise to people who were critical of the complexity and the sophisticated arguments of the Greek philosophers.

Minucius Felix' *Octavius*, which is one of the latest of the early Christian apologies from around 200 AD, is organised as one long account of the conversion of a pagan to Christianity. In this text, a tendency in earlier Christian apologetic writings has been made the determining principle of the content and structure of the entire text. *Octavius* is organised as a dialog between Caecilius, who was not a Christian, and Octavius, who was a Christian.

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[33] Περινοοῦντι δέ μοι τὰ σπουδαῖα συνέβη γραφαῖς τισιν ἐντυχεῖν βαρβαρικαῖς, πρεσβυτέραις μὲν ὡς πρὸς τὰ Ἑλλήνων δόγματα, θειοτέραις δὲ ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἐκείνων πλάνην· καί μοι πεισθῆναι ταύταις συνέβη διά τε τῶν λέξεων τὸ ἄτυφον καὶ τῶν εἰπόντων τὸ ἀνεπιτήδευτον καὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς ποιήσεως τὸ εὐκατάληπτον καὶ τῶν μελλόντων τὸ προγνωστικὸν καὶ τῶν παραγγελμάτων τὸ ἐξαίσιον καὶ τῶν ὅλων τὸ μοναρχικόν. The Greek text and the English translation are from M. Whittaker (ed.), *Tatian. Oratio ad Graecos and Fragments*, Oxford 1982.

Caecilius was the first speaker, offering a positive account of the Roman religion and cult and criticising Christianity (Minuc., Oct. 5-15). After Caecilius has spoken, Octavius responded, giving a positive account of Christianity and criticising the Roman cult and religion (Minuc., Oct. 16-38). The conclusion was that Caecilius was convinced of the superiority and the truth of Christianity and therefore he converted to Christianity.

In my opinion, Minucius Felix' *Octavius* can be seen as a kind of conclusion to the second century Christian apologetics. If this is correct, the theme 'conversion' stands out as an - and maybe the - main theme in early Christian apologetics. In this connection it is important to be aware that in *Octavius* the partners in the dialogue were friends - a Christian and a non-Christian. This is important because it shows that an important aim of early Christian apologetics was to teach ordinary Christians how to enter into dialog with their non-Christian friends in order to convert them to Christianity.

As the final example of how the structure of the arguments in the apologetic writings reveals matters of consequence for the aim of these treatises I will point to the combination of negative and positive arguments in the apologies. This is a structure found in more or less all the texts - even in Tertullian who in my opinion is the most negative of all the apologists. In Tertullian's *Apologeticum* we find the following sentence: "I shall at once go on, then, to exhibit the peculiarities of the Christian society, that, as I have refuted the evil charged against it, I may point out its positive good" (Tert., apol. 39.1).[34] This sentence is part of an argument which runs through chapters 36 to 45. In these passages, Tertullian rejected the accusations against the Christians of being disloyal toward the emperor and the empire. He argued that the enemies of the emperor are to be found among the Romans themselves while the Christians were loyal and positive toward the emperor as well as toward the empire. The argumentative strategy was thus to reject the negative charges and to establish a positive image instead of the negative.
In Justin's first apology, we find the same combination of defence against accusations and positive descriptions of Christianity itself. In

[34] *Edam iam nunc ego ipse negotia Christianae factionis, ut, qui mala refutaverim, bona ostendam.*

fact, this form of argument structures the whole of Justin's first apology: chapters 1-12 deal with the illegality of the processes against the Christians and defence against the accusations of atheism and immorality, as well as refuting the alleged disloyalty to the Roman Empire. Chapters 13-67 demonstrate the superiority of Christianity concerning moral, teaching, worship and communal life.

This means that in early Christian apologetic writings, positive descriptions of the dogmatic and ethical content of Christianity seem to be as important as the negative rejections of accusations and charges raised against the Christians. What could this imply for our understanding of the aim and audience of early Christian apologetics? This is the subject of the last part of my lecture.

4. Aims and Audience of the Early Christian Apologetic Writings

Some early Christian apologists addressed their writings explicitly to some representative of Roman authority, e.g. even to the emperor himself,[35] others to a single person, and at least one later apologetic text was addressed to weak Christians (Or., Cels. praef. 4; 6). The question is, however, whether the apologetic writings were in reality addressed to these authorities and individuals and to them alone?

One could very easily imagine that many of these writings, such as Origen's *Contra Celsum*, had an internal function amongst the Christians themselves, providing them with arguments sustaining and supporting their belief. It could further be imagined that the apologetic texts aimed at giving educated non-Christians a better understanding of the true nature of Christianity. A third possibility could be that the underlying scope of apologetic texts was protreptic or exhortatory. In recent literature on early Christian apologetics, one can find the argument that these texts had an internal as well as an external audience, and even the argument that the audience is almost exclusively internal.[36]

In my opinion it is impossible to deny that the Christian apologists from the second century believed - or at least hoped - that their

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[35] E.g. Tert., apol. 1; Just., 1 apol. 1.

[36] M. Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum. Die Kontroverse um den christlichen Wahrheitsanspruch in den ersten Jahrhunderten*, Paderborn ²2001, 16f.; M. Edwards / M. Goodman / S. Price / C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews and Christians*, Oxford 1999, 8f.

writings would reach and influence the addressees to whom their writings are formally addressed. This would be the case both when addressing their treatises to Roman authorities and when addressing them to individuals.

In the case of the texts which were addressed to Roman authorities this conclusion is not only based on the mere fact that most of the second century apologists did in fact address their writings to some form of Roman authority. The conclusion is also - indeed mainly - based on the topics dealt with by the second century apologists. Many of these topics are of a 'political' or legal nature, things which can only be changed by the authorities, such as improving the legal status of the Christians, and thus the well-being of the community.

Even if it is true that many of the second century apologists actually intended the Roman authorities to read their treatises, this does not mean that the audience of the second century apologetic writings was exclusively those who are mentioned in the texts as the formal addressees. Many of the themes dealt with in the apologetic texts as well as the structure of the arguments indicate that the texts could have been intended for multiple audiences such as other Christians who needed arguments in their dialogue with non-Christians or non-Christians who could be converted to Christianity with the help of good arguments.

From the structure and the content of the arguments in many of the early Christian apologetic texts we can conclude that apologetic arguments included negative defences and critiques of non-Christians as well as positive descriptions of Christianity itself. This is an obvious result of reading the texts. The more interesting question is whether we can conclude anything further from this fact.

In my opinion we can conclude that the apologists were not satisfied with rejecting the charges raised against them by non-Christians. They were also eager to convince their enemies that Christianity was the only true religion. Why? An obvious answer would be that if the aggressors were convinced about the truth and superiority of Christianity they would not persecute the Christians any longer. This is probably an important part of the answer. An additional answer could be that the apologists were convinced that an inherent idea in Christianity was that Christianity is for all people. It was therefore a

duty for Christians to try to convince everyone of the superiority of Christianity - not for the benefit of Christians themselves, but for the benefit of those who were not yet Christians. In a word, this is what we call 'mission'. The question is now whether we can find explicit expressions of this idea in the apologetic writings?

As we have seen, many of the apologists included accounts of their own or the conversion of others in their apologetic arguments. Minucius Felix' *Octavius* is one long account of a process of conversion. This suggests to me that the protreptic or missionary aim of the early Christian apologetic writings was very strong. If this is true, we can further conclude that the main audience of the treatises was Christians whose duty it was to carry out missionary activities in their surroundings, and non-Christians who could be convinced about the truth and superiority of Christianity with the help of such arguments. As we have seen almost all of the apologies allowed a significant amount of space to providing positive descriptions of Christianity. This supports the view that a very important intention of the apologies was to convert non-Christians to Christianity. The positive alliances with parts of the philosophical tradition accomplish the same goal.

There are, however, also argumentative structures in some of the apologies which point in another direction. This is the case with the use of irony. The use of irony as an apologetic strategy could have different purposes. In many modern European, at least Danish, discussions about belief, irony can be used as a rhetorical strategy. Most people in these contexts accept that others speak ironically of their beliefs, at least to some degree. Some of them could also change their ideas when viewing themselves from an ironic perspective. I do not, however, think that the situation was the same in the second century conflict between Christians and non Christians. This conflict was too heated. Using irony would probably not have helped Tertullian to convince his opponents. In fact, the opposite reaction might be the more likely result. If this is correct, we must conclude that Tertullian's *Apologeticum* was not addressed to his opponents with the purpose of convincing them about their mistakes or about the truth of Christianity. Instead, we should appreciate that the intended audience of the text was rather those Christians who required reinforcement in their conviction that Greek and Roman religious practises were foolish and that Christianity was the only truth.

5. Conclusion

Already from the beginning of the second century, the charge of atheism was prominent and dangerous for the Christians. The main problem for the Christians was that the charge of atheism included charges of neglecting social and cultic duties which - according to common Greek and Roman opinion - could cause the wrath of the gods. As this could lead to all kinds of problems for the empire and local societies, it was therefore very important for the apologists to argue that Christians were not atheists and that they were loyal to society and to the empire and that they prayed to their own god for the welfare of the emperor and the empire. The charge of being atheists was thus the most serious and far-reaching accusation against the Christians in the second century. Many other accusations were also raised against the Christians in the second century, such as charges of ethical or moral nature, of breaking with the older traditions, etc. Such charges were also a serious challenge for the Christians - but not as far-reaching as the charge of atheism.

The apologists used a wide range of different rhetorical and literary strategies to refute these charges. Basically they employed negative rejections of the accusations as well as positive explanations of what Christians really thought and did.

From the content of and the strategies used in the apologies we can draw quite a few interesting conclusions about the aims and intended audiences of the apologies. My conclusion is that the apologists had a complex variety of purposes with their texts: the explicit addressees and the outspoken aims of the apologies were to convince certain people - who could be emperors, proconsuls, individual prominent pagans, etc. - that Greek and Roman religion is an illusion, and that Christianity is the only true religion, and that the persecutions of the Christians therefore should stop. However, the aims and addressees of the apologies are probably more complex. Thus one audience could also have been those pagans who were on the verge of converting to Christianity. The aim of the apologist would have been to convince them that Christianity is the only true religion. Another possible audience could have been those Christians whose obligation it was to perform missionary activities in their surroundings. They needed strategies and arguments which

they could use in their daily contact with non-Christians. Finally, yet another audience could possibly have been those weak Christians who had to be convinced that their decision to convert to Christianity was right because Christianity is the only true religion.

Early Christian apologetics thus dealt with a wide range of different accusations and topics; the aims and addressees were manifold. However, the defence against the charges of atheism and the attempt to convert non-Christians to Christianity could be stressed as most important objects of the apologists.

Jews and Christians in Conflict? Polemical and Satirical Elements in Revelation 2-3

Eve-Marie Becker

1. Introduction

1.1. The Topic

The topic of this paper: 'Conflicts among Jews and Christians in New Testament times' deals with historical and regional aspects of the problem: *historically* we have to think of particular dates[1], such as 39-41 (the Caligula-crisis)[2], 49 (the edict of Claudius)[3], 70 (destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem), 132-135 CE (Second Jewish War = Bar Kokhba-Revolt)[4] which influence the Jewish[5] as well as the early

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[1] Cf. e.g. J. Maier, *Zwischen den Testamenten. Geschichte und Religion in der Zeit des zweiten Tempels*, NEB.E 3, Würzburg 1990, 161-190.

[2] Cf. P. Bilde, *The Roman Emperor Gaius (Caligula)'s Attempt to Erect his Statue in the Temple of Jerusalem*, in: StTh 32 (1978), 67-93. Cf. also: G. Theissen, *Lokalkolorit und Zeitgeschichte in den Evangelien. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, Freiburg ²1992, 146-153.

[3] Cf. H. Botermann, *Das Judenedikt des Kaisers Claudius. Römischer Staat und Christiani im 1. Jahrhundert*, Hermes. E 71, Stuttgart 1996. Cf. also: J. Engberg, *Impulsore Chresto. Opposition to Christianity in the Roman Empire ca. 50-250 AD*, ECCA 2, Frankfurt 2007, 89-106.

[4] The revolts 115-117 CE mainly involve the Jewish communities outside Palestine (e.g. Northern Africa, Egypt, Syria). P. Schäfer, *Der Bar Kokhba-Aufstand. Studien zum zweiten jüdischen Krieg gegen Rom*, TSAJ 1, Tübingen 1981; P. Schäfer (ed.), *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered*, TSAJ 100, Tübingen 2003; W. Eck, *The Bar Kokhba Revolt. The Roman Point of View*, in: JRS 89 (1999), 76-89.

[5] Cf. in general: P. Schäfer, *The history of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World. The Jews of Palestine from Alexander the Great to the Arab Conquest*, London 2003.

Christian history.[6] In a *regional respect* we have to think of the main places where the processes of mission and mixture, definition and conflict among 'Jews' and 'Christians' occurred, such as Jerusalem, Antioch, the cities in Asia Minor and Greece, and, finally, Rome.[7]

The cities in Asia Minor seem to be a prominent place where we find Jewish communities, Jewish-Christian traditions and Christian communities at the same time.[8] Therefore we could assume religious rivalries in this area.[9] If we then look at the close relationship between Jews and Christians during this period in these areas we will touch upon the 'Parting(s) of the Ways'-discussion.[10]

Thus we have to review the different aspects of the New Testament literature which are connected with the separation of early Christianity from its Jewish background, e.g.:

- how should we describe Paul's relationship to the Jews regarding 1Thes 2:14-16; Phil 3:2f.; Rom 2 or Rom 9-11? The debate on the 'New Perspective on Paul' counts as just *one* way of dealing with these questions.[11]

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[6] Until 70 CE. Cf. E.-M. Becker, *Der jüdisch-römische Krieg (66-70 n. Chr.) und das Markus-Evangelium. Zu den Anfängen frühchristlicher Historiographie*, in: E.-M. Becker (ed.), *Die antike Historiographie und die Anfänge der christlichen Geschichtsschreibung*, BZNW 129, Berlin 2005, 213-236. Cf. E.-M. Becker, *Das Markus-Evangelium im Rahmen antiker Historiographie*, WUNT 194, Tübingen 2006, 80-82.

[7] Cf. in general: F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC-AD 337*, Cambridge ²2001; P. Schäfer, *Judeophobia. Attitudes towards the Jews in the Ancient World*, Cambridge 1997.

[8] Cf. e.g.: J. Dräger, *Die Städte der Provinz Asia in der Flavierzeit. Studien zur kleinasiatischen Stadt- und Regionalgeschichte*, EHS.G 576, Frankfurt 1993; R. Strelan, *Paul, Artemis, and the Jews in Ephesus*, BZNW 80, Berlin 1996, 165f.

[9] Cf. R.S. Ascough (ed.), *Religious rivalries and the struggle for success in Sardis and Smyrna*, Studies in Christianity and Judaism 14, Waterloo 2005.

[10] Cf. e.g.: J.D.G. Dunn (ed.), *Jews and Christians. The parting of the ways A.D. 70 to 135. The Second Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism (Durham, September, 1989)*, WUNT 66, Tübingen 1992.

[11] Cf. A.J.M. Wedderburn, *Eine neuere Pauluserspektive?*, in: E.-M. Becker / P. Pilhofer (eds.), *Biographie und Persönlichkeit des Paulus*, WUNT 187, Tübingen 2005, 46-64. S. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul. The 'Lutheran' Paul and His*

- how should we interpret Synoptic texts like Mt 23 or Mt 27:25 without naming anti-Jewish or even anti-Semitic elements here?[12]
- how should we read polemical passages against Jews within the Gospel of John (cf. Jn 5:10-18; 6:41-59; 8:44-59)?[13]
- what kind of polemical language against Jews do we find specifically in Jn 8:44 (ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου), and moreover in Rev 2:9; 3:9 (ἡ συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ) - namely within texts which could be seen as the New Testament's strongest syntagms of anti-Jewish polemics?[14]

In this perspective it is obvious that the discussion about the relationship between Jews and Christians is connected with the debate on the Christian origins of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism[15] as Harold W. Attridge describes in his article on the Gospel of John:

Critics, Grand Rapids 2004; D. Sänger, *Review. Westerholm, Stephen*, in: ThLZ 132 (2007), 170-173.

[12] Cf. U. Luz, *Matthew 21-28. A. Commentary*, Hermeneia, Minneapolis 2005, 108-121 in reference to Did 8:1-2. Luz also names the 'polemical intentions' of Mt 23:1-12 (107f.). On the modern period of interpretation: 174-186. Cf. also J.D.G. Dunn, *The Question of Anti-Semitism in the New Testament Writings of the Period*, in: J.D.G. Dunn (ed.), 1992, 177-211 (203-210).

[13] Cf. to Anti-Judaism in the Fourth Gospel the contributions in: R. Bieringer (ed.), *Anti-Judaism and the Fourth Gospel*, Lousville 2001.

[14] See below H.W. Attridge and B. Schaller.

[15] Concerning the distinction between 'anti-Judaism' and 'anti-Semitism' in Anglo-American language cf. J. Gager, *Judaism as Seen by Outsiders*, in: R.A. Kraft / G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds.), *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, Philadelphia 1986, 99-116. 103: "Much discussion has been given to the terms anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism [...]. Although it has become customary to use anti-Judaism when speaking of early Christianity and anti-Semitism when referring to pagan antiquity or the modern world, the terms continue to be used interchangeably. More often than not, anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism refer to the same set of phenomena, that is, beliefs, feelings and actions that manifest hostility towards Jews, even when an effort is made to establish distinctions on the basis of differing motivations." Cf. also: J. Dunn, 1992, 179-211.

> Die Polemik erreicht ihren Höhepunkt in 8,44 mit der Jesus in den Mund gelegten Schmähung, daß die Juden Kinder des Teufels [...] seien [...]. Der Gebrauch, den man von der Darstellung 'der Juden' im Text machte, hatte einen langen und unheilvollen Einfluß auf die Gesch(ichte) des Christentums ausgeübt und gipfelte im Holocaust.[16]

Attridge names here important elements which indicate an interrelation of 'Parting of the Ways' on the one hand and Christian 'anti-Judaism' on the other hand: *polemical* texts of the New Testament, reflecting conflicts among Jews and Christians, have been used in the sense of content and proposition for anti-Judaistic or even anti-Semitic attitudes. Anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism based on New Testament appeared in the "Wirkungsgeschichte" of these texts. Berndt Schaller emphasizes:

> Antijudaistische Potenz haben Texte des NT [...] wirkungsgesch(ichtlich) entwickelt. Die im letzten Drittel des 1. Jh. einsetzende und in der 1. Hälfte des 2. Jh. sich durchsetzende personelle, institutionelle und ideelle Abtrennung bzw. Ablösung der christl(ichen) Gemeinden von der jüd(ischen) Umwelt hatte zur Folge, daß die im NT (und nicht minder auch im AT) enthaltenen, ihrem Wesen nach binnenkrit(ischen) Äußerungen und Polemiken als generell gegen das Judentum und die Judenheit gerichtet verstanden und entsprechend strukturell bzw. aktuell instrumentalisiert wurden.[17]

For dealing with these questions precisely, we must do two things in general: first, we have to reflect on the *phenomenon of polemical language* in terms of rhetorical style and proposition.[18] Second, we

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[16] H.W. Attridge, *Johannesevangelium*, in: [4]RGG 4 (2001), 552-562 (556f.).

[17] Cf. B. Schaller, *Antisemitismus/Antijudaismus III.*, in: [4]RGG 1 (1998), 558 f. (559).

[18] I will therefore not deal with the phenomenon of apologetics here cf. e.g.: A. Wlosok, *Die christliche Apologetik griechischer und lateinischer Sprache bis zur konstantinischen Epoche. Fragen, Probleme, Kontroversen*, in: A. Wlosok / F. Paschoud (eds.), *L'apologétique chrétienne gréco-latine à l' époque prénicénienne*, EnAC 51, Vandœuvres-

have to differentiate between the New Testament texts themselves and their impact on 'Wirkungsgeschichte'.

1.2. The Role of Rev 2-3

The topic of 'Jews and Christians in Conflict' raises historical and literary questions about textual sources and literary techniques of texts which might presuppose, reflect, discuss or even provoke conflicts among Jews and Christians in early Christian times. The Book of Revelation, especially chapters 2-3, the Seven Letters to the communities in Asia Minor, would be appropriate for this topic for several reasons. *First*: the Book of Revelation in comparison with other New Testament texts has to be regarded as the most closely related to the history and politics of its time.[19] *Second*: the literary style of this apocalyptic writing in particular contains narrative,[20] prophetic[21] and epistolographic[22] (Rev 2-3) elements. Thus it appears as a literary synthesis of Jewish elements (such as: the prophetic tradition, and the genre of apocalyptic literature)[23] as well as a genuine literary genre of early Christian writings (Rev 1:1: ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), which has been widely discussed.[24] *Third*: by looking at the author and his audience, which is already mentioned in Rev 1:11 as well as at the interrelation of author and audience, it becomes quite obvious that the religious profile of the Book of Revelation has to be located *in between* Jewish traditions and early Christian communities.[25] By taking up Jewish traditions on the one hand and defining Christian identity on the other hand, the

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Genève 2004, 1-28; J.-C. Fredouille, *L' apologétique latine pré-constantinienne (Tertullien, Minucius Felix, Cyprien). Essai de typologie*, in: ibid., 39-60.

[19] Cf. Rev 13. L.L. Thompson, *The Book of Revelation. Apocalypse and Empire*, New York 1990.

[20] Cf. the mission vision (Rev 1:9-20) - see below - or the narration of visions in general.

[21] See below.

[22] Cf. M. Karrer, *Die Johannesoffenbarung als Brief. Studien zu ihrem literarischen, historischen und theologischen Ort*, FRLANT 104, Göttingen 1986.

[23] See below.

[24] Cf. e.g. D.E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, WBC 52 A, Dallas 1997, lxx-xc.

[25] See below. B. Wander, *Judenchristentum I. Neues Testament*, in: ⁴RGG 4 (2001), 601-603; J.C. Paget, *Jewish Christianity*, in: W. Horbury (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism* 3 (1999), 731-775.

Book of Revelation most clearly gives insight into an ongoing debate on the issue of the 'Parting of the Ways'. It is therefore surprising that although the debate on anti-Judaism has touched especially Rev 2-3,[26] the 'Parting of the Ways'-debate has not yet paid that much attention to the role the Book of Revelation played in the conflict of continuity and redefinition in early Christianity.[27] Therefore I will focus on specific polemical passages within Rev 2-3 which do not just give a reference to the historical situation in which the Book of Revelation was written, but which also seem to reveal a situation of conflict among Jewish and Christian groups in *Asia Minor*.[28]

1.3. The Approach

Within the so-called Seven Letters we find a large number of polemical expressions.[29] The phenomenon of polemics is quite common in ancient times.[30] We find polemical language within philosophical, religious and social debates as well as within historiographical or ethonographical literature.[31] Polemical language is frequently used by Greek and Latin authors against Barbarians[32] and therefore also

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[26] Cf. B. Schaller, 1998, 558; cf. also: J. Lambrecht, *'Synagogues of Satan' (Apk 2:9 and 3:9). Anti-Judaism in the Book of Revelation*, in: R. Bieringer (ed.), *Anti-Judaism and The Fourth Gospel*, Louisville 2001, 279-292.

[27] Cf. J.D.G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways. Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity*, London ²2006. Cf. also the volume: J.D.G. Dunn (ed.), *Jews and Christians*, 1992.

[28] Cf. e.g.: C.J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in their Local Setting*, JSNT.SS 11, Sheffield 1986.

[29] Cf. 2.1. C.J. Hemer, 1986, 86f. picks up Deissmann's idea of the "'polemical parallelism' between the cults of Christ and of Caesar".

[30] Cf. W. Speyer, *Polemik*, in: DNP 10 (2001), 3-5. Concerning polemics as a literary element cf. e.g.: N.T. Croally, *Euripidian polemic. 'The Trojan women' and the function of tragedy*, Cambridge Classical Studies, Cambridge 1994. Concerning the pagan polemic against Christians cf. e.g.: S. Benko, *Pagan Criticism of Christianity During the First Two Centuries A.D.*, in: ANRW 2.23,2 (1980), 1055-1118.

[31] Cf. O. Wischmeyer, *Criticism of Judaism in Greek and Roman Sources. Charges and Apologetics (Fourth Century BC to Second Century AD)* (in this volume).

[32] Cf. T.E.J. Wiedemann, *Barbarian*, in: ³OCD (2003), 233.

against Jews.[33] Thus, the phenomenon of anti-Judaistic and anti-Semitic polemic already exists in the pre-Christian period of ancient history.[34] Polemical language and literature to a large extent is a component of ancient rhetoric too, especially within the *genus iudiciale* (e.g. accusation)[35] or within the *genus demonstrativum* (e.g. blame and dispraise).[36]

It is not at all surprising to find polemical passages in the Book of Revelation. As the Book of Revelation as a whole is a mixture of Jewish and Christian elements and traditions, the polemical passages within Rev 2-3 are either based on Jewish, mainly prophetic traditions,[37] or they are formulated specifically according to the historical circumstances. These passages are either oriented *against* opponents[38] or oriented *against* Jewish traditions / places as Rev 2:9; 3:9 indicate. While *Jan Lambrecht*'s recent contribution to anti-Judaism in the Book of Revelation is interested in a general interpretation of

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[33] Cf. A.J.S. Spawforth, *Semitism (Pagan), anti-*, in: [3]OCD (2003), 1383; P. Schäfer, 1997, esp. 197-211.

[34] Cf. e.g.: P. Schäfer, *Antisemitismus / Antijudaismus II.*, in: [4]RGG 1 (1998), 557-558; J.N. Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World*, NT.S 41, Leiden 1975. Cf. see O. Wischmeyer, *Criticism of Judaism* (in this volume).

[35] Cf. H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik. Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft*, München [2]1973, § 146, 88. Concerning considerations on the hermeneutical impact of rhetorics in the frame of religions cf.: W. Wuellner, *Reconceiving a Rhetoric of Religion. A Rhetoric of Power as the Power of the Sublime*, in: J.D. Hester (ed.), *Rhetorics and Hermeneutics. Wilhelm Wuellner and His Influence*, Emory Studies in Early Christianity, New York 2004, 22-77. Concerning rhetorical polemics e.g. in the Gospel of Jn cf. J.D.G. Dunn, *The Question of Anti-Semitism*, 1992, 201 and 210f.

[36] Cf. H. Stauffer, *Polemik*, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* 6 (2003), 1403-1415 (1405): Stauffer points to the lack of ancient terminology but refers to the phenomenon of polemics and the controversies in debating it (e.g. Plat., nom. 934d - 936b: Aristot., rhet. 1358b-1359b). Cf. also H.F. Plett, *Einführung in die rhetorische Textanalyse*, Hamburg [9]2001, 17.

[37] Cf. 2.2.

[38] See below.

Rev 2:9; 3:9,[39] my paper will focus on the polemical language and the literary style of the syntagm 'synagogue of Satan' and will discuss the literary idea behind language of polemic and conflict.

2. The Language of Polemic and Conflict within Rev 2-3

The disposition and the literary function of each of the Seven Letters is relatively similar: they are addressed to a concrete audience and they refer to the communities' situation explicitly. Therefore the Seven Letters - like the Pauline letters - are intended to have "eine Hinwendung zur Gemeindesituation".[40] In contrast to the Pauline letters, however, the Seven Letters in Rev 2-3 do not have any argumentative structure. To a large extent, they seem to be topical letters. The literary elements,[41] such as: 'Botenformel, Gemeindekritik, Aufforderung zur Umkehr' indicate the general *prophetic impetus* of these letters.[42] The letters act as "Mittel prophetischer Verkündigung".[43] The Seven Letters consist of similar literary elements.[44] According to *David E. Aune* we find eight stereotype elements:[45] 1. adscriptio, 2. command to write, 3. the τάδε λέγει-formula, 4. Christological predications, 5. narratio, 6. dispositio, 7. proclamation formula, 8. promise-to-the-Victor formula. The polemical elements are mainly located within *narratio* and *dispositio*. What kinds of polemical language do we find in Rev 2-3?

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[39] Cf. J. Lambrecht, 2001, 279-292.

[40] Cf. U.B. Müller, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, ÖTK 19, Gütersloh 1984, 91. J.M. Knight, *Apocalyptic and prophetic literature*, in: S.E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 BC-AD 400*, Leiden 1997, 467-488 (477) emphasizes the "similar rhetorical structure" of the letters within Rev 2-3.

[41] See below.

[42] We find parallel elements within the Israelitic and early Jewish literature (cf. e.g. 2Chr 21:12-15; Jer 29:1-23 / Jer 36:1-23 LXX; syr Bar 78-87): Cf. U.B. Müller, 1984, 91f. Cf. also I. Taatz, *Frühjüdische Briefe. Die paulinischen Briefe im Rahmen der offiziellen religiösen Briefe des Frühjudentums*, NTOA 16, Freiburg 1991, 46-81.

[43] U.B. Müller, 1984, 91.

[44] Cf. J. Roloff, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes*, ZBK.NT 18, Zürich ²1987, 47; U.B. Müller, 1984, 91-93.

[45] Cf. D.E. Aune, 1997, 119-124.

2.1. Survey of Lexiomatics

Letter	*Polemic Semantics*
Ephesus 2:1-7	- λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους [...] ψευδεῖς - v.2 - μισεῖς τὰ ἔργα τῶν Νικολαιτῶν ἃ κἀγὼ μισῶ - v.6
Smyrna 2:8-11	- τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων □Ιουδαιους εἶναι ἑαυτοὺς καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ - v.9
Pergamon 2:12-17	- κατοικεῖς, ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ - v.13 - ἀπεκτάνθη παρ □ ὑμῖν, ὅπου ὁ σατανᾶς κατοικεῖ - v.13 - κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ [...] - v.14 - κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν [τῶν] Νικολαιτῶν ὁμοίως - v.15
Thyatira 2:18-29	- ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα □Ιεζάβελ, ἡ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφῆτιν καὶ διδάσκει [...] - v.20 - [...] οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βαθέα τοῦ σατανᾶ - v.24
Sardis 3:1-6	- καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ - v.1
Philadelphia 3:7-13	- ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ σατανᾶ τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται - v.9
Laodicea 3:14-22	- ὅτι χλιαρὸς εἶ - v.16

How can we classify or specify the elements of polemical language we find here?

2.2. Topical Polemics on the Basis of Prophetic Speech

All together we find four elements of polemical language each of which has to be understood as *topical*: it is based on prophetic traditions and mainly addressed to the audience directly, namely to the communities in question.

1. These phrases are intended as a polemic against *assumed opponents* as we have them e.g. in the Pauline letters (e.g. 2Cor 11:13; 11:26; Gal 2:4). In that sense Rev 2-3 is similar to the polemical style of some Pauline passages.
   prophetic polemic against opponents:
   - λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους [...] ψευδεῖς (Rev 2:2)
   - ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ σατανᾶ τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται (Rev 3:9)

2. Some phrases, however, could also be meant as a critique of the *communities' activities*. Here again, we have analogies to the Pauline letters (e.g. 1Cor 4:8).
   prophetic critique of the communities:
   - [...] οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βαθέα τοῦ σατανᾶ (Rev 2:24)
   - ὅτι χλιαρὸς εἶ (Rev 3:16)
   - καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ (Rev 3:1)

3. This polemic can be connected with the accusation of *blasphemy*, which, of course, has to be regarded as a strong form of religious polemic, which we know e.g. from Ez 35:12 but also from 2Macc 8:4; 10:35 (cf. also Mk 14:64).
   prophetic accusation of blasphemy:
   - τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτοὺς καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ (Rev 2:9)

4. These types of polemical language could also be expressed in *metaphorical language* taking up the idea of more or less invented, i.e. ciphered, heretical types or figures, which are mainly based on Old Testament figures (Balaam; Jezebel).

   prophetic critique concerning religious affiliation and belief expressed in metaphors:
   - μισεῖς τὰ ἔργα τῶν Νικολαιτῶν ἃ κἀγὼ μισῶ (Rev 2:6)
   - κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν Βαλαάμ (Rev 2:14)
   - κρατοῦντας τὴν διδαχὴν [τῶν] Νικολαιτῶν ὁμοίως (Rev 2:15)
   - ἀφεῖς τὴν γυναῖκα Ἰεζάβελ, ἡ λέγουσα ἑαυτὴν προφῆτιν καὶ διδάσκει (Rev 2:20).

The *rhetorical function* of these polemical phrases lies in the characterization of the communities' reality - its own problems or its conflicts with persons claiming leadership - even if that has been described in exaggerated terms and in *hyperbole*. The *pragmatic function* seems to be quite clear: the audience should return to the writer's sphere of influence which might have come under pressure.[46] The writer himself - in this case the apocalyptic writer John - claims to have formal and moral *authority* for advising or admonishing his audience. John's authority is *on the one hand* based on his prophetic self-understanding, which becomes obvious when we see that his mission and visions are connected with prophetic ideas in several instances. I will give two examples of this:

- within the introductory formula in Rev 1:1-3 John is proclaiming a *macarism* (V.3) in respect to his readers and the audience (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες) of his book. Here he characterizes his writings as λόγοι τῆς προφητείας.
- John's mission and profession are connected with the testimony of Jesus (μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ) (Rev 1:2; 1:9). In Rev 19:10 John defines this more clearly as the 'spirit of prophecy' (τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας).

Therefore John's mission has to be understood as a *prophetic profession*. In that sense John considers himself to be a prophetic figure with a prophetic message. In terms of motifs and themes the mission vision in Rev 1[47] as well as the Seven Letters to the communities in *Asia*[48] are in accordance with the general prophetic impetus of Revelation. In that sense a large portion of the polemical language

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[46] Cf. e.g. H. Räisänen, *The Clash Between Christian Styles of Life in the Book of Revelation*, in: D. Hellholm (ed.), *Mighty Minorities? Minorities in Early Christianity - Positions and Strategies. Essays in Honour of Jacob Jervell on his 70th Birthday 21 May 1995*, Oslo 1995, 151-166.

[47] Cf. D.E. Aune, 1997, 60-116. Cf. also: E.F. Lupieri, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John*, Grand Rapids 2006, who describes the Book of Revelation as "the oldest Christian prophetic writing" (35).

[48] Cf. 1.3.

which is based on prophetic traditions corresponds to the explicitly mentioned self-understanding of the writer's authority.

On the other hand John's authority does not seem to be sufficient: therefore his letter-writing to the seven communities follows the vision of the Son of Man (Rev 1:12-20) and has to be understood as an order for dictation from Christ, the Lord, i.e. the risen and exalted κύριος himself: τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς [...] ἐκκλησίας γράψον (Rev 2:1; 2:8; 2:12; 2:18; 3:1; 3:7; 3:14). This means, in fact, that the Seven Letters are written by John in that he receives Christ's authority: in a fashion like that of Jesus' polemic against Jews in Jerusalem in Jn 8:44, the exalted Christ names opposing groups in Smyrna and Philadelphia as being connected with the συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ in Rev 2-3. In terms of authority we find similar ideas in Jn 8:44 and Rev 2:9; 3:9.

2.3. Satirical Polemics

A fifth type of polemical language seems to be unique, especially because of its lexiomatics. In the letters to Smyrna, Pergamon and Philadelphia we find special syntagms which were not known in Greek literature before the Book of Revelation was written, namely the syntagm ἡ συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ in Rev 2:9; 3:9 and the syntagm ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ in Rev 2:13. Similar expressions are known from some Qumran-Texts: in 1 QH^{a} X,22 e.g. we find the expression עדת בליעל which stands for 'congregation' or 'assembly of Belial'.[49] Analogue expressions can also be found e.g. in 1 QM XIV,9 or in 1 QM XV,9. However, the polemical strength of the expressions in Rev 2:9; 3:9 is surprising because the communities in Smyrna, Pergamon and Philadelphia are the only communities which have been evaluated as being 'positive' in Rev 2-3.[50] Therefore the syntagms express

[49] Cf. translation in: F.G. Martínez / E.J.C. Tigchelaar (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, Vol. 1, Leiden 1997, 163. Cf. further references in: D.E. Aune, 1997, 165. Concerning early Christian texts, cf. also Barn 5:13; 6:6: πονηρευομένων συναγωγαί; D.E. Aune, 1997, 165. Concerning the meaning and usage of 'Belial' cf. J. Maier, *Die Qumran-Essener. Die Texte vom Toten Meer Band III*, UTB 1916, München 1996, 194f.

[50] Cf. the positive valuation of the communities within the οἶδα-clause / *narratio* - concerning Smyrna: ἀλλὰ πλούσιος εἶ (Rev 2:9); Pergamon: καὶ κρατεῖς τὸ ὄνομά

a gap between the evaluation of the communities' standing and the allusion to some kind of external danger, threat, or conflict.

While the syntagm ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ certainly relates to a conflict which is connected with political, i.e. executive power (cf. ὁ θρόνος; ἀπεκτάνθη παρ' ὑμῖν), the syntagm ἡ συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ seems to refer to a conflict among religious groups (cf. Rev 3:9b).[51]

Both expressions, however, are based on primarily Jewish religious motifs:

- Συναγωγή has to be understood as the most important meeting place for Jews. While Mk 13:9 parr. predicts Jewish persecution of the followers of Jesus in synagogues (cf. 2Cor 11:24), Jn 16:2 refers to their expulsion from the synagogues (cf. Rev 2:9: ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ σατανᾶ).
- Θρόνος occurs within the Book of Revelation several times (e.g. Rev 1:4; 4:2-11; 7:10 etc.). In the majority of cases it is related to the 'throne of God' (esp. Rev 4; 22:1.3) and sometimes explicitly qualified as θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ. In addition, it could also be related to God's counterpart, i.e. 'Satan' (e.g. Rev 13:2; 16:10). So the 'throne' represents either God's or Satan's power. Rev 12f. indicate that Satan and his throne can also act with concrete political power.

Both lexemes stand for polemical language which is based on religious terms taken from a Jewish context. Because of its aggressive *impetus* ([...] τοῦ σατανᾶ) and its antithetical position within the concrete aim of the letters, I would like to characterize this type of polemical language as *satirical polemic*.

- τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτοὺς καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ (Rev 2:9)
- κατοικεῖς, ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ (Rev 2:13)
- ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ σατανᾶ τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται (Rev 3:9).

In contrast to Rev 2-3, we find a *satanical* qualification of *certain persons* elsewhere in the New Testament texts: in Mk 8:33 (cf. Mt 16:23) Jesus designates Peter as 'Satan', i.e.: Jesus reveals the nature of a

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μου (Rev 2:13); Philadelphia: μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον [...] (Rev 3:8).

[51] See below.

figure who is temptating him. 'Satan' was already active at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (cf. Mk 1:13; cf. Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13). In Lk 22:3 and Jn 13:27 Satan enters into Judas Iscariot as the initial point of Jesus' passion. Here, again, 'Satan' has to be understood as God's adversary. In 2Cor 11:14 Paul refers to the 'Satan' as the opponent of Christ in correlation to the 'false apostles' (ψευδαπόστολοι, 2Cor 11:13) who are opponents of Paul.[52] In 2Cor 12:7 Paul identifies a weak part of his own body as an enemy (σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί), representing a messenger of Satan (ἄγγελος σατανᾶ).

Although there is a mixture of the lexemes σατανᾶς and διάβολος in Mt 4 and Lk 4, both lexemes can also be differentiated programmatically: Mark, e.g. avoids διάβολος; the Gospel-writer John - like the writers of the *Johannine Letters* - obviously prefers the lexeme διάβολος: in Jn 6:70 the betraying disciple is in advance announced as διάβολος, which is picked up again later on in Jn 13:2: διάβολος here connotes a person who betrays, causes deception, and misleads. With regard to this observation the semantics of διάβολος could be relevant for the interpretation of Jn 8:44:[53] the Jewish opponents of Jesus' preaching in the Temple, i.e. the Pharisees (Jn 8:13; cf. 8:22; 8:31: Ἰουδαῖοι), are characterized as: ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστέ. A similar idea is expressed in 1Jn 3:8; 3:10 (τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου) - here, however, it is meant concerning a Christian ethical division within the communities themselves. Therefore the semantic idea of the lexeme διάβολος seems to be the motif describing a person who misleads and who is leading other people astray. This person could be identified as 'Satan' (Mt 4; Lk 4), as a Jewish opponent (Jn 8), as Christian community-members (1Jn 3) or even as a persecutor of Christian communities (Rev 2:10).[54]

In contrast to these examples the syntagms ἡ συναγωγὴ / ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ are not directed at persons but at places. The expressions συναγωγή / θρόνος mainly stand for social and religious

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[52] See above.

[53] Cf. e.g. H. Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, HNT 6, Tübingen 2005, 445f. In reference to: J.D.G. Dunn, *The Question of Anti-Semitism*, 1992, 195-203.

[54] Cf. G. von Rad / W. Foerster, διαβάλλω, κτλ., in: ThWNT 2 (1935), 69-80; O. Böcher, διάβολος, κτλ., in: EWNT 1 (²1992), 714-716.

meeting places (συναγωγή: aspect of 'community') and for places of political and executive power (θρόνος: aspect of 'dominion').

3. The Interpretation of ἡ συναγωγὴ / ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ as Satirical Polemic

3.1. Theoretical Questions

Studies in 'neutestamentliche Formgeschichte' and related fields like: 'frühchristliche Literaturgeschichte', such as: Rudolf Bultmann's *Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition,*[55] Martin Dibelius' *Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*[56] or *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur,*[57] Klaus Berger's *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments,*[58] Philipp Vielhauer's *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur,*[59] Georg Strecker's *Literaturgeschichte des Neuen Testaments*[60] or Marius Reiser's *Sprache und literarische Formen des Neuen Testaments*[61] do not use the term 'satire' in any sense for describing the language of polemic and conflict within New Testament texts.[62] This lack of dealing with 'satirical elements' as a description

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[55] Cf. R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition. Mit einem Nachwort von Gerd Theißen*, Göttingen [10]1995.

[56] Cf. M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, G. Bornkamm (ed.), Tübingen [6]1971.

[57] Cf. M. Dibelius, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur*, F. Hahn (ed.), München 1975.

[58] Cf. K. Berger, *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments*, Heidelberg 1984.

[59] Cf. P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur. Einleitung in das Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die Apostolischen Väter*, Berlin 1975.

[60] Cf. G. Strecker, *Literaturgeschichte des Neuen Testaments*, UTB 1682, Göttingen 1992.

[61] Cf. M. Reiser, *Sprache und literarische Formen des Neuen Testaments. Eine Einführung*, UTB 2197, Paderborn 2001.

[62] Instead of dealing with 'satire' New Testament scholars have started to think about 'irony' (cf. J. Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel. Text and subtext*, NTS. SS 72, Cambridge 1992) and 'humor' (cf. F. Vouga, *Personalität und Identität bei Paulus. Die theologische Entdeckung des Humors*, in: E.-M. Becker / P. Pilhofer [eds.], *Biographie und Persönlichkeit des Paulus*, WUNT 187, Tübingen 2004, 149-165.) Concerning the observation of 'polemics' in the field of Old and New Testament exegesis cf. e.g.: H.M. Barstad, *The religious polemics of Amos. Studies in the Preaching of Am 2, 7B-8; 4,1-13; 5,1-27; 6, 4-7; 8, 14*, VT.S 34, Leiden 1984; S. Hulmi, *Paulus und Mose. Argumentation und Polemik in 2 Kor 3*, Schriften der Finnischen Exegetischen Gesellschaft in Helsinki, Göttingen 1999; Y. Amit, *Hidden polemics in biblical narrative*,

of language and its literary function seems to be typical within biblical scholarship as Johnny E. Miles has pointed out with regard to Old Testament studies recently:

> Unfortunately, the term 'satire' has yet to gain any widespread recognition in literary-critical approaches to the Bible though it does appear in the titles of some biblical studies' publications, and certain related subjects have been treated in biblical scholarship. This nominal concern no doubt stems in part from an inability to discern satire as a genre within the Bible.[63]

This is quite different in the field of Patristic Studies because authors like Jerome or Tertullian have always been connected with their interest in writing satirical texts.[64] *Miles* himself focuses on a more or less synchronic approach in reading Proverbs 1-9 as satirical literature by stating: "[...] Proverbs 1-9 can be read *as* satire while keenly aware that such material may not actually *be* 'satire' in the formal sense of genre."[65] Unlike Miles I will look for a more diachronic-based (i.e.: 'literatur- und gattungsgeschichtlich') view of satirical phrases and syntagms while being aware of the fact that

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Biblical interpretation series 25, Leiden 2000. Concerning observations in the field of religious studies, e.g.: T.L. Hettema / A. van der Kooij (eds.), *Religious Polemics in Context. Papers Presented to the Second International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions Held at Leiden, 27-28 April 2000*, Studies in Theology and Religion 11, Assen 2004; J. Snoek, *Religious Polemics in Context. An Annotated Bibliography*, in: ibid., 507-588.

[63] J.F. Miles, *Wise King - Royal Fool. Semiotics. Satire and Proverbs 1-9*, JSOT.SS 399, London 2004, 30.

[64] Cf. e.g. D.S. Wiesen, *St. Jerome as a Satirist*, Ithaca 1964; E.P. Meijering, *Tertullian contra Marcion. Gotteslehre in der Polemik. Adversus Marcionem I-II*, PP 3, Leiden 1977; E. Procter, *Christian controversy in Alexandria. Clement's polemic against Basilideans and Valentinians*, New York etc. 1995; I. Opelt, *Hieronymus' Streitschriften*, BKAW 2.44, Heidelberg 1973; I. Opelt, *Die Polemik in der christlichen lateinischen Literatur von Tertullian bis Augustin*, BKAW 2.63, Heidelberg 1980. Cf. also: M. von Albrecht, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur 1*, München ²1997, 197.

[65] J.F. Miles, 2004, 31.

'satire' as a literary genre of course cannot be found within New Testament texts themselves.[66] For defining this approach I would like to suggest two distinctions.

First: the distinction between 'satire' and 'satirical elements': satire[67] as a specific literary genre mainly occurs in Roman literature during the earlier period of the Roman Empire. Quintilian's statement: *satura quidem tota nostra est* (inst. or. 10.1,93) stands for the specific Roman interest in writing satirical literature. The list of the most famous Roman satirical authors starts with Lucilius († 102 BC) *(saturae)*[68] who counts as the inventor of the literary genre of 'satire'[69], especially because he styles his writing in hexameters.[70] Then we have to think of Varro (116-27 BC) (*saturae Menippeae*),[71] Horace *(sermones)*,[72] Persius (*saturae*)[73] and Juvenal *(saturarum libri)*.[74] Susanne Braund mentions the different themes of the 'Roman Verse-Satire' as: connection with Rome and its system of patronage, moralistic topics and sexuality, philosophical debates, and the theory and criticism of literature and intertextuality.[75] It is interesting to see that obviously a change of style, expression, and intention occurred with authors writing in the Augustan period - like Hora-

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[66] See the definition of the genre below.

[67] Concerning the term cf. e.g.: S.H. Braund, *Roman Verse Satire*, Greece & Rome. New Surveys in the Classics No. 23, Oxford 1992, 6-32.; S.M. Braund, *Juvenal. Satires Book I*, Cambridge 1996, 3-56; C.J. Classen, *Satire, the Elusive Genre*, in: SO 63 (1988), 95-121; G. von Wilpert, *Satire*, in: *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*, Stuttgart [7]1989, 809-812.

[68] Cf. M. von Albrecht, 1997, 202-216. Cf. also: W. Reissinger, *Formen der Polemik in der römischen Satire. Lucilius, Horaz, Persius, Juvenal*, Diss. Erlangen-Nürnberg 1975.

[69] Cf. Horace, serm. 1.10,73-74: *Lucilius [...] carminis auctor [...]*.

[70] Cf. P.L. Schmidt, *Satura*, in: DkP 4 (1979), 1568-1569, 1568. Cf. S. Braund, *Satire*, in: DNP 11 (2001), 101-104 (102f.): Er legte sich auf den Hexameter fest, "das Metrum der Epik - eine Entscheidung, die eine andauernde Beschäftigung der S(atire) mit dem Epos unausweichlich machte".

[71] Cf. M. von Albrecht, 1997, 472-490.

[72] Cf. M. von Albrecht, 1997, 565-587.

[73] Cf. M. von Albrecht, 1997, 798-806.

[74] Cf. M. von Albrecht, 1997, 806-820.

[75] Cf. S. Braund, 2001, 103.

ce[76] - and authors who are influenced by the political and cultural circumstances of the Neronic or post-Neronic period like Juvenal. While Horace's (65-8 BC) *sermones* could not be treated as political or social 'invectives'[77] - they are dealing much more with the anthropological question of: *qui fit [...]*[78] -, the later satirical author Juvenal (ca. 60-140 CE), who seems to have stretched satire "to its full potential",[79] bases his writing on *indignatio* (1,79) and therefore gives up the pedagogical idea of revealing abuses and expressing protest as Gian Biagio Conte has stated:

> Im Gegensatz zu Horaz und auch anders als Persius glaubt Iuvenal nicht, daß seine Dichtung menschliches Verhalten beeinflussen kann: sie begnügt sich mit der Enthüllung, dem lauten und zornigen Protest, ohne falsche Hoffnung auf Rettung.[80]

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[76] Cf. D. Gall, *Die Literatur in der Zeit des Augustus*, Klassische Philologie kompakt, Darmstadt 2006, 73-79.

[77] Cf. D. Gall, 2006, 73: "Die *Sermones* sind keine Invektiven; die Unzulänglichkeiten und Absurditäten einzelner und der Gesellschaft werden nicht an identifizierbaren Individuen, sondern an typisierten 'Fällen' vorgeführt." Gall defines this type as 'Typensatire'. Cf. S. Koster, *Die Invektive in der griechischen und römischen Literatur*, Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie 99, Meisenheim 1980, 22f.: Der Satire des Horaz ist "im Gegensatz zu der des Lucilius und zur Alten Komödie das 'strafgesetzliche' Moment entzogen, nicht aber der moralische Anspruch, Rügedichtung zu sein", ibid. 23.

[78] *Qui fit Maecenas, ut nemo quam sibi sortem // seu ratio dederit seu fors obiecerit, illa // contentus vivat, laudet diversa sequentis?* (1.1,1-3) Cf. D. Gall, 2006, 74: "Das Sich-Verwundern über die Unfähigkeit der Menschen, ihr Leben glücklich zu führen, prägt die ganze Sammlung". Cf. also: J. ter Vrugt-Lentz, *Horaz' 'Sermones'. Satire auf der Grenze zweier Welten*, in: ANRW 2.31,3 (1981), 1827-1835 (1835): "Die Satire des Horaz richtet sich an das Individuum im Hinblick auf sein Glück, nicht im Hinblick auf seine Verantwortlichkeit". R.A. LaFleur, *Horace and Onomasti Komodein. The Law of Satire*, in: ANRW 2.31,3 (1981), 1790-1826, looks especially at serm 1,4; 1,10; 2,1 for characterizing Horace's idea of the literary character of satires.

[79] E.J. Gowers, *Satire*, in: [3]OCD (2003), 1358-1359 (1359).

[80] G.B. Conte, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur. Die Literatur der Kaiserzeit*, in: F. Graf (ed.), *Einleitung in die lateinische Philologie*, Stuttgart 1997, 228-296 (245).

By doing so, Juvenal returns to 'invective'[81], i.e. to the aggressive style of Lucilius' satires. Unlike Juvenal, Persius (34-62 CE) represents a satirical type which is located between anthropological considerations and political invectives.[82]

Along with the specific literary genre of 'satire' (= *sermones* or *saturae*) in a much more narrow sense, Roman literature in the period of the Early Roman Empire deals with satirical elements in various forms and genres of literature in a broader sense: in a literary respect, the *genre* 'satire' therefore needs to be differentiated from *literature*

- which contains 'satirical passages' (e.g. Aristophanes, Herodas, Plautus),
- which has a 'satirical impact and meaning' (e.g. Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*)[83]
- which contains 'satirical elements' basically in terms of language (i.e. semantics) and style (i.e. rhetorical function; e.g. Martial's *Epigrammata*; specific elements within Roman satires).

As scholars often have debated, the development of satire and satirical literature is connected with the Hellenistic 'diatribe', "a lecture which popularized moral philosophy with jokes, parody, fables, and split dialogue".[84] Horace at least indicates this influence of *diatribe* on satire implicitly (ep. 2.2,60).[85]

Beside the distinction between 'satire' and 'satirical elements' a *second* differentiation should be done, namely the differentiation of the 'phenomenon or the attitude of satire' on the one hand and the 'literary style of satirical texts' on the other hand. In the history of culture, it is mainly on the basis of the Roman satires (e.g. Friedrich

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[81] Cf. R.A. LaFleur, 1981, 1793, who bases this expression on: S.C. Fredericks, *Juvenal. A Return to Invective*, in: E.S. Ramage / S.C. Fredericks / D.L. Sigsbee (eds.), *Roman Satirists and Their Satire*, Park Ridge 1974, chapter 7.

[82] Cf. C. Reitz, *Die Literatur im Zeitalter Neros*, Klassische Philologie Kompakt, Darmstadt 2006, 97-101.

[83] S. Braund, 2001, 102. Cf. concerning Seneca: C. Reitz, 2006, 42-47.

[84] E. J. Gowers, 2003, 1358. Cf. M. von Albrecht, 1997, 197 who mentions this explicitely concerning Horace's satires. Cf. also: W. Kroll, *Satura*, in: RE II. A 1 (1921), 192-200, who characterizes Juvenal's and Persius' satires as "ethische Diatriben" (196).

[85] Cf. E.J. Gowers, 2003, 1358.

Schiller)[86] that the 'phenomenon or the attitude of satire' has developed as a human *habitus*. According to Peter L. Berger satire is the usage of the comic with polemic intent and a literary style in general.[87] In that sense Johnny Miles e.g. looks for a satirical attitude behind Prov 1-9. My further observations, however, will focus on the question of what kinds of 'satirical elements' can be found within Rev 2-3, in terms of language (i.e. semantics) and style (i.e. rhetorical function and literary style).

3.2. ἡ συναγωγὴ / ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ and its Literary Function

In his article on *Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament*[88] Klaus Berger makes three points regarding the Seven Letters in Rev 2-3: 1. he looks at the letter-ending as a topical element;[89] 2. he describes parts of the letter-introduction as an *Apostolikon*, i.e. eine "Selbsteinführung des Apostels";[90] 3. he identifies Rev 3:14 as an element of a Greek hymn.[91]

The polemical elements in Rev 2-3 are not mentioned here. Even the strong polemical expressions: ἡ συναγωγὴ / ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ which we have preliminarily defined as "satirical polemic", are not specified in Berger's article either.

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[86] Cf. F. Schiller, *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung (Ästhetische Abhandlungen)*, in: F. Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke 5*, München 2004, 694-780. Schiller presents here the classical definition for modern satires: "In der Satire wird die Wirklichkeit als Mangel dem Ideal als der höchsten Realität gegenübergestellt" (722). "Satirisch ist der Dichter, wenn er die Entfernung von der Natur und den Widerspruch der Wirklichkeit mit dem Ideale [...] zu seinem Gegenstande macht" (721).

[87] Cf. P.L. Berger, *Erlösendes Lachen. Das Komische in der menschlichen Erfahrung*, Berlin 1998, 185: "Die Satire ist, grob gesagt, der Gebrauch von Komik für Angriffszwecke". Berger (185) also refers to Northrop Frye's definition here, who characterizes satire as "militante Ironie": N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton 1957, 223. Cf. also J. Brummack, *Satire*, in: U. Ricklefs (ed.), *Fischer Lexikon Literatur 3*, Frankfurt 1996, 1723-1745: "Heute versteht man unter Satire nicht in erster Linie eine *Gattung*, sondern einen literarischen *Modus*" (1724).

[88] Cf. K. Berger, *Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament*, in: ANRW 2.25,2 (1984), 1031-1432.

[89] Cf. K. Berger, 1984, 1349f.

[90] Cf. K. Berger, 1984, 1353f.

[91] Cf. K. Berger, 1984, 1160.

If we follow Berger's classification we will have to classify satirical elements in Rev 2-3 under the rubric of the "Genos dikanikon und Verwandte", and more closely "Anklage, Invektive und Polemik".[92] Berger derives his criteria for defining this literary type mainly from a monograph by an Erlangen Classicist, Severin Koster (1980), who worked on 'invectives' in Greek and Latin literature.[93] Koster defines 'invectives' in the following terms:

> Die Invektive ist eine strukturierte literarische Form, deren Ziel es ist, mit allen geeigneten Mitteln eine namentlich genannte Person öffentlich vor dem Hintergrund der jeweils geltenden Werte und Normen als Persönlichkeit herabzusetzen.[94]

Koster's monograph shows that *invective* and *satire* or *polemic*[95] are related but that they also need to be distinguished from one another.[96] The main criterion for differentiating *invective* on the one hand from *satire* or *polemic* on the other hand is the relationship to the relevant subject or topic (Sachbezogenheit).[97] While Paul's conflict with the so-called 'false apostles' within 2Cor 10-13[98] or his *diatribe*

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[92] Cf. K. Berger, 1984, 1281-1287. The categories 'Genos symbuleutikon', and more closely 'Paränese und exhortatio' or 'Diatribe' (cf. K. Berger, 1984, 1049-1077, 1124-1132) do not lead much further here. The categories 'Vorliterarische Gattungen', and more closely: 'Brief [...] Briefliche Teilgattungen [...] Tadel' (cf. K. Berger, 1984, 1326-1363) do not seem to be relevant here because they are simply taken out of the texts in a descriptive way.

[93] Cf. S. Koster, 1980.

[94] Cf. S. Koster, 1980, 39. Cf. also: D. Weber, *Invektive*, in: LACL (^{3}2002), 350f.

[95] Concerning a closer distinction between satire and polemic cf. W. Dieckmann, *Streiten über das Streiten. Normative Grundlagen polemischer Metakommunikation*, Tübingen 2005, 28-31.

[96] Cf. S. Koster, 1980, 39f.; 22f. See above.

[97] Cf. S. Koster, 1980, 30. To the relation of satire and polemics cf. H. Stauffer, 2003, 1403-1415.

[98] See above.

in Rom 2[99] e.g. at least for some extent can be understood as personal *invectives*, the negative syntagms in Rev 2:9; 3:9; 2:13 are focused on non-personal subjects, viz. places, and should therefore be characterized as *polemic*, and more specifically as *satirical polemic*.

Concerning a description of the literary genre we could say:

- polemic defines the *literary form* of the texts in general.
- satirical elements in terms of *language and rhetorical or literary style* like ἡ συναγωγὴ / ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ can be defined as follows: these elements are metaphors, substituting reality in the sense of *synecdoche*, as an *oxymoron*, and for the purpose of *hyperbole*, expressing aggression.[100]
- The *rhetorical function* of satirical elements is closely related to *tropes*.[101] The definition of 'satirical elements' needs to be distinguished from *irony* which is - unlike satire - a fixed term of rhetoric.[102]
- Finally: the *pragmatical function* could be described as satirical polemic.

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[99] Cf. O. Wischmeyer, *Römer 2,1-24 als Teil der Gerichtsrede des Paulus gegen die Menschheit*, in: NTS 52 (2006), 356-376; R. Jewett, *Romans. A Commentary*, Hermeneia, Minneapolis 2007, e.g. 223; S.K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans*, SBLDS 57, Chico 1981, 110-114.

[100] Something similar to the syntagms ἡ συναγωγὴ / ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ can e.g. be found in *Juvenal*, Sat 1.2,8-9: *quis enimnon uicus abundat tristibus obscenis* - which has been translated by S.H. Braund, 1992, 43 as: "[...] Why, every street is just full of stern-faced sodomites".

[101] Cf. H.F. Plett, ⁹2001, 89-123.

[102] *Satire* is - unlike irony - not a term of rhetorical teaching: Cf. H. Lausberg, *Ironia*, in: *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, Stuttgart ³1990, 729-731; H. Lausberg, *Elemente der literarischen Rhetorik*, Ismaning ¹⁰1990, 78f.; cf. H.F. Plett, ⁹2001, 116-123.

Characterization of the Syntagms in Rev 2:9; 3:9; 2:13

Literary form:	Polemic
Rhetorical function:	Tropes
Pragmatical function:	Satirical polemic
Satirical language and stylistical literary elements:	Satirical elements: -metaphor -synecdoche; oxymoron -hyperbole -aggression

In his book on *Einfache Formen* André Jolles defines the pragmatical function of satire as follows:

> Je nachdem die Entfernung zwischen dem Tadelnswerten, das durch Spott gelöst wird, und dem Spötter, der es löst, größer oder geringer ist, unterscheiden wir [...] zwei Formen, die wir Satire und Ironie nennen. Satire ist Spott mit dem, was wir tadeln oder verabscheuen und was uns fern steht. Wir wollen mit dem Getadelten nichts gemeinsam haben, wir stehen ihm schroff gegenüber, deshalb lösen wir es ohne Mitempfinden, ohne Mitleid [...] Satire vernichtet - Ironie erzieht [...] Bittere Satire ist auf ihren Gegenstand erbittert.[103]

In that sense 'satire' and 'satirical elements' indicate a distance between author und subject which the author is not willing to reduce but which he wants to articulate in terms of aggression and bitter-

[103] A. Jolles, *Einfache Formen. Legende, Sage, Mythe, Rätsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen, Witz*, Konzepte der Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft 15, Tübingen ⁷1999, 255.

ness.[104] While polemic offers a chance of discussion and revision,[105] satirical language implies a distance which itself is irreversible.

If we read the syntagms συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ and θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ as satirical polemic we will assume that the apocalyptic writer John marks a distance between συναγωγή and ἐκκλησία on the one hand and between ἐκκλησία and Rome *alias* Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ μήτηρ τῶν πορνῶν (Rev 17:5)[106] on the other hand. Thus the usage of satirical polemic could be seen as a literary strategy which compensates experiences of religious and historical separation and/or suffering. The question of which historical reality could be assumed against the background of these religious experiences needs to be treated separately, especially from archaeological and epigraphic perspectives.[107] In his unpublished dissertation (1968)

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[104] Concerning the diversivification of ancient and modern emotions cf. e.g.: S.H. Braund, *Beyond Anger. A study of Juvenal's third Book of Satires*, Cambridge 1988; D.L. Cairns, *Ethics, ethology, terminology. Iliadic anger and the cross-cultural study of emotion*, in: S. Braund / G.W. Most (eds.), *Ancient Anger. Perspectives from Homer to Galen*, Yale Classical Studies 32, Cambridge 2003, 11-49; D. Konstan, *Aristotle on anger and the emotions. The strategies of status*, ibid., 99-120; C. Gill, *Reactive and objective attitudes. Anger in Virgil's Aeneid and Hellenistic philosophy*, ibid., 208-228. Cf. also N. Frye, *Anatomy* (no. 96), 223 who refers to some elements of satirical writings, such us a specific group of audience in a certain social context. To Rev 2:9 cf. also: E.F. Lupieri, 2006: "the issue is [...] the bitter confrontation between contemporary Jewish groups" (118).

[105] This is the idea in: G.E. Lessing, *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet. Eine Untersuchung*, Berlin 1769 (G.E. Lessing, *Werke Bd. 2*, München ³1995, 167-228).

[106] In the Book of Revelation the 'Satan' can be identified with the 'dragon' (cf. Rev 12:9; 20:2) or the prostitute 'Babylon' (Rev 17-19).

[107] Cf. the recent literature to this field: H.-J. Klauck, *Die Johannesoffenbarung und die kleinasiatische Archäologie*, in: M. Küchler / K.M. Schmidt (eds.), *Texte - Fakten - Artefakte. Beiträge zur Bedeutung der Archäologie für die neutestamentliche Forschung*, Fribourg 2006, 197-229; P.R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, Cambridge 1991; P.W. van der Horst, *The Synagogue of Sardis and Its Inscriptions*, in: P.W. van der Horst, *Jews and Christians in Their Graeco-Roman Context*, WUNT 196, Tübingen 2006, 43-52; F.M. Cross, *The Hebrew inscriptions from Sardis*, in: HThR 95 (2002), 3-19; A.T. Kraabel / A.R. Seager, *The synagogue and the Jewish community*, in: G.M.A. Hanfmann (ed.), *Sardis from prehistoric to Roman times. Results of the archaeological exploration of Sardis 1958-1975*, Cambridge 1983, 168-190; T. Rajak, *Synagogue Cité*

Alf Thomas Kraabel, for example, has argued that the problem of conversion could have produced rivalries between Jews and Jewish-influenced Christian communities in parts of Asia Minor.[108] The traditions of Jewish Christianity - as we find them in Asia Minor and as we can assume that they are in the background of the Book of Revelation - could be considered to be a link between Jewish groups and Christian communities. In this perspective James D. G. Dunn's statement on the value of polemical passages in the Gospel of John could also be applied to the polemical and satirical impact of Rev 2:9; 3:9: "John's language is more the language of *intra*-Jewish polemic than of *anti*-Jewish polemic".[109]

En Asie Mineure, in: Les Communautés Religieuses Dans Le Monde Gréco-Romain. Essais De Définition. Sous la direction de N. Belayche / S.C. Mimouni, Bibliothèque De L'École Des Hautes Études Sciences Religieuses 117, Turnhout 2003, 93-105, who refers to two inscriptions concerning donations from Phrygia (CIJ 766, 1st century CE) and Ionia (CIJ 738, 3rd century CE). Concerning the imperial cult in particular cf. recently e.g.: M. Bernett, *Der Kaiserkult in Judäa unter den Herodiern und Römern. Untersuchungen zur politischen und religiösen Geschichte Judäas von 30 v. bis 66 n.Chr.*, WUNT 203, Tübingen 2007, who refers to the Herodian installation of Emperor cult in Palestine and Jerusalem since 28 BCE; M. Clauss, *Kaiser und Gott. Herrscherkult im römischen Reich*, München 2001 (repr. 1999); H. Cancik (ed.), *Die Praxis der Herrscherverehrung in Rom und seinen Provinzen*, Tübingen 2003; I. Gradel, *Emperor worship and Roman religion*, Oxford 2002.

[108] A.T. Kraabel, *Judaism in Western Asia Minor under the Roman Empire with a preliminary study of the Jewish Community at Sardis, Ludia*, Diss. Harvard University Cambridge, Mass. 1968, 28 to Rev 2:9: "... the conversion of Jews or proselytes to Christianity has aroused the fury of the local Jewish community. In a reply to this situation of tension, the author of revelation in effect denies that the Smurnean Jews are true Jews; they are 'Satan's synagogue', not genuine representatives of the true Israel". - Concerning the recent discussion on the separation of Christianity and Judaism cf. also: D. Boyarin, *Border Lines. The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, Divinations, Philadelphia 2004, esp. 27-30, who considers the partition of Judaism and Christianity to be a result of heresiological debates from the 2nd century CE onwards.

[109] J.D.G. Dunn, *The Embarrassment of History. Reflections on the Problem of 'Anti-Judaism' in the Fourth Gospel*, in: R. Bieringer et al. (eds.), *Anti-Judaism and The Fourth Gospel*, Louisville 2001, 41-60 (52); E.F. Lupieri, 2006, states generally: "The Apocalypse is at the same time a Judaizing and an anti-Jewish text" (43).

3.3. Results and Hermeneutical Aspects

Where do these observations on satirical elements in Rev 2-3 lead us? I will resume the results of this paper in four hermeneutical perspectives:

1. The description of satirical elements leads to a more specific differentiation of the *literary elements* that we find in the Book of Revelation, especially in Rev 2-3.

2. Thus, we will also get a more detailed insight into the different literary elements which constitute a book like the Book of Revelation as a *macro-genre* called *apocalyptic literature*.

3. The distinction between *polemic* and *satire* does not simply offer a more precise distinction of certain literary elements. It also helps to look behind attitudes of groups or individual authors which are probably based on historical experiences. In addition it helps to specify the pragmatic function of literature: while polemical language seems to keep an *extra-vert* dimension, provoking a change of mind, satirical language is oriented much more *intra-vert*, neglecting any way of discussion or revision, marking partition and separation.

4. The use of satirical elements in Rev 2-3, however, also provokes *theological criticism*: the aggressive and bitter tone of the satirical language reveals elements of inhumanity within the Book of Revelation which also need to be discussed on the level of theological 'Sachkritik'.[110]

[110] Cf. L. Bormann, *Sachkritik*, in: *Lexikon der Bibelhermeneutik*, O. Wischmeyer et al. (eds.), Berlin (forthcoming); cf. also U. Luz, 2005, 175 concerning Mt 23. Concerning the hermeneutical debates on the Book of Revelation also cf.: E.-M. Becker, *Patmos - ein utopischer Ort? Apk 1,9-11 in auslegungs- und kulturgeschichtlicher Hinsicht*, in: Saeculum 59 (2008), 81-106. Dr. Ray C. Jones (Randers, Denmark) must be thanked for much help with the English text.

Apologetic Motives in Gnostic Texts

Barbara Aland

Apologetic and gnostic texts seem to be very different - so much that we may ask, if there is any important relationship between them at all. From the different addressees and to the various characteristics and aims of the prevailing texts to the theological and philosophical reasons given for them, we become first aware of differences only, even if it would be possible to define a literary genre of apologists (and gnostics as well) at all. Can it truly be said that there are apologetic motives in Gnostic texts? Nonetheless, despite all of the differences we could not achieve a full understanding of the texts without taking into account their apologetic elements. Therefore the question about apologetic motives in gnostic texts is justified, as we will see.

In the following discussion, I will proceed in stages. First, I shall raise the question in detail, why both 'genres' seem to be so very different, to the point that we often do not feel compelled even to ask why there should be gnostic motives in apologetic texts.

Second, I shall examine the question how much would be gained by searching for apologetic motives, and obversely how much would be lost if we were to abandon the search for apologetic motives in gnostic texts.[1]

1. Apologists and Gnostics as Different Genres

I restrict both groups of writings, with which I have to deal here, in the following way:

as apologists I confine myself to a selection of texts from the second and third centuries, although there exist certainly more than are traditionally known as *apologies*.

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[1] Cf. A. Klostergaard Petersen, *The Diversity of Apologetics. From Genre to a Mode of Thinking* (in this volume), raises similar questions in dealing with this topic.

Some restrictions also would seem to be necessary if we look for comparable characteristics with gnostic texts.

For these are at hand mostly for the second to the fourth centuries. I choose from them primarily Valentinian texts, but of course, the smaller group of those gnostic texts as well which show explicit characteristics of polemic and apologetic traces.[2]

Such comparison enables us to answer the question at hand, where, if at all, will we find apologetic motives in gnostic texts.[3]

Given this restriction, apologists can be defined as those who must or feel they must defend their Christian faith against emperors and other high-ranking persons or even to convince themselves[4] that they are preaching the truth. They frame their apologies in language and terms that make their Christian doctrine attractive to other people and to themselves.

They also systematically develop a Christian doctrine of the logos as a reason for their faith, which will in turn become in part the basis for developing a systematic Christian theology.

Now we have to ask: why does this only very distantly remind us of Gnostic theologians? Can it truly be said that there are apologetic motives in Gnostic texts?

Concerning the following three points, that is:

- the addressees of both groups,
- the intelligent and extensive report of a faith,
- and the development of a doctrine of the Logos

Apologists and Gnostics show very different key features. The apologetic way in which they develop their theological understand-

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[2] TestVer (NHC IX,3), ApcP (NHC VII,3), UW (NHC II,5) H. Cancik treats „Apologetik/Polemik" under the same reference, *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe*, Vol. 2, Stuttgart, 29-37.

[3] Cf. K. Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Nag-Hammadi-Traktate "Apokalypse des Petrus" (NHC VII,3) und "Testimonium Veritatis" (NHC IX,3). NHS XII*, Leiden 1978; B. Aland, *Frühe direkte Auseinandersetzung zwischen Christen, Heiden und Häretikern*, Berlin 2005, 20-35.

[4] I agree with A. Klostergaard Petersen (see no. 1) that apologies though on the surface addressed to the 'pagan' world served "for the most part internally to sustain the Christian world-view"."In order to convince the external world of the legitimacy of the truth of one's world-view, one must also persuade oneself." (in this volume).

ing of the relationship of humans to God is most fully realized in their unique expression and interpretation of the Logos. Who they choose to address - i.e. themselves rather than emperors - and how they report on their faith both derive from this more underlying and quintessential difference: a rational recognition of God through the Logos. The gnostics, by contrast, teach a quite different path to insight. We have to ask: can it truly be said that there are apologetic motives in Gnostic texts?

Gnostics and Apologetics, as defined groups, cannot be identified as one and the same; as entities, they are quite different.

We shall deal with the differences with respect to the three points mentioned above.

1.1. The Addressees

With regard to the apologists, it seems relatively easy to answer the question of who they are addressing: they are dealing with high-ranking and important personalities with broad power in the Roman Empire. The question of historicity may be put aside here. In any case popular opinion regarding Christendom must have been so broadly established that the apologists could dare to write their tractates without being mocked as a result.

Very different from the Gnostics. Generally, and in comparison, the Gnostics did not address their writings to those outside of their own community (or communities). They were not interested in promoting or apologising for their faith. If they spoke to other persons outside their churches at all, such speeches took the form of inter-Christian disputes characterised partly by violent polemics against other early Christian Catholic groups.

Let us take the Testimonium Veritatis[5] as an example. This short text is directed towards

> those who know to hear not with the ears of the body but with the ears of the mind. For many have sought after the truth and have not been able to find it; because there has

[5] NH IX,3.

> taken hold of them the old leaven of the Pharisees and the scribes of the Law[6].

The text includes a strong polemic against the Catholic church and its adherents, their understanding of baptism, their longing for martyrdom and its supposed hope for redemption and resurrection. These and other beliefs are attacked as dangerous and stupid. Similarly the author opposes several gnostic schools on the same grounds ("you do not understand Christ spiritually when you say, we believe in Christ. For this is the way Moses writes in every book")[7]. Claiming to be the only true Christians, the Gnostics believed that they should be allowed to preach in Catholic churches - against the strong protest of Irenaeus[8] of course.

But the above text is an unusual one, a somewhat rare text so to speak. Although missionary and apologetic motives do exist in Gnostic texts, they are quite unique. Those gnostic writings characterised by apologetic or protreptic features praise more the highest Lord who has granted them recognition of himself. It may be that gnostic writings with apologetic marks are rather meant for the public[9], but the text remains unusual strange in comparison with Greek apologies and needs a 'Coptic reading' as Stephen Emmel demanded.[10] Until that has been done there will be no thorough comparison between Gnostic 'apologetic' writings[11] and Greek apologetics.

For the most part, or so it seems to me, the Gnostics directed their texts to their own Gnostic communities. These texts were meant to comfort and encourage, to strengthen and rejoice and, most of all of,

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[6] TestVer (NH IX,3) 29.6-15.

[7] TestVer (NH IX,3) 50.1-5.

[8] Iren., haer. 3.15,2. This piece of polemics demonstrates very clearly not only the mutual polemic against each other but its apologetic background too. For both parties advocate their theory and maintain it against the interpretation of Christian faith by the Church. Both parties have to argue their point of view in an apologetic way.

[9] Cf. e.g. H.G. Bethge in the introduction of his translation of UW (NHC II,5), Vol. 1, 241.

[10] S. Emmel, *Religious Tradition, Textual Transmissions and the Nag Hammadi Codices*, in: J.D. Turner / A. McGuire (eds.), *The Nag Hammadi Library after fifty Years. Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemn*, Leiden 1997, 34-43.

[11] Cf. HA (NHC II,4); Eug (NHC III,3; V,1); SJC (NHC III,4; BG 3).

to bring pleasure, delight and cheer. Their themes are accordingly different from those found in the texts of the apologists.

By contrast, apologists saw it as their duty to argue against what is regarded as truth by philosophers or better to demonstrate that they, the Christians, possess the highest truth. They aim in their texts to prove this over and again. By contrast, the Gnostics were generally preaching to those who already know the truth and to make them certain in this knowledge. Only occasionally would a Gnostic author choose to develop a full and systematic understanding of his gnostic beliefs:[12] yet that is what apologists always have to do. The Gnostic, then could choose to focus and expand on any aspect of that belief system, elucidating only that which he deemed important with respect to the prevalent address at hand, the situation and the reason for writing. By contrast, what apologists have to prove the rationality of the whole cosmic system always and all the time.

1.2. Themes

Although Gnostic theologians do not prefer a fixed order for the treatment of their themes, it is nevertheless possible to gather examples of the most important subjects of Christian theology from their point of view. Such a comparison also makes their differences from the Apologists more apparent.

1.2.1. Theology

Principally Gnostics and Apologists treat the same major themes, that is, theology, the Logos-doctrine, cosmology and anthropology. As far as theology is concerned, Apologists and Gnostics presume a strict belief in monotheism as a basis for their faith. However, in contrast to the Gnostics, the validity of this position becomes a point of proof for the Apologists, with the help of contemporary Platonic ideas. For example, Tatian depends on middle Platonic thinking, regarding the transcendency of God. For him, as for other Apologists the Christian God is the 'first' God of the philosophers.[13]

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[12] As it for example is done in the Tractatus Tripartitus.

[13] Tatian, Or. 4.3-5. Cf. for Tatian M. Elze, *Tatian und seine Theologie*, FKDG 9, Göttingen 1960, 66.

The Gnostics on the other hand do not need to argue this point philosophically, even though they may be aware of the philosophers' proofs and their terminology and may even allude to their proofs as part of their own arguments. Insofar as they speak of God to their own groups of believers, they may use metaphors in order to affirm the Gnostic truth, what their addressees know anyway: that there is only one God. They may not, however, be able to reach him for "those of the middle"[14] prevent them from recognising the truth, that is, those souls who are enticed and captured by the πλάνη, who prevents them from recognising the truth.[15] We will come back to this point later under the category of Logos.

The relationship between this God, the cosmos and the human beings is equally important to consider, since both speak of these themes.

Let us take for example the Gospel of Truth again. Here we find the one transcendent God, who wants to be recognized by all beings as coming from him and being in him.

> He (Jesus) has brought many back from error. He has gone before them to their places, from which they had moved away since it was on account of the depths that they received error, the depths of the one, who encircles all spaces while there is none, who encircles him. It was a great wonder that they were in the Father, not knowing him and (that) they were able to come forth by themselves since they were unable to comprehend or to know the one in whom they were.[16]

Here the author alludes to the so-called "fall of the aeons," a mythological story which explains the relationship between those of the middle[17] to the Father. A similar argument by relating mythologi-

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[14] EvVer (NH I,3)17.34f.

[15] EvVer (NH I,3) 17.28-18.11. Convincingly H.M.Schenke explains that the πλάνη ("Täuschung") is the equivalent for the demiurge within other gnostic systems and writings (NHC 1.32).

[16] EvVer (NHC I,3) 22.20-23.

[17] EvVer (NHC I,3) 17.34-35. Cf. NHC 1,32. A very clear account of what is meant by the Gnostic *fall* is given in TracTri (NHC 1,5) 75.17-77,37. The editors of the Lei-

cal facts would be impossible for the apologists, who depend on the logic of rational proofs for their beliefs. The Gnostic understanding of the *fall* may also owe much to Middleplatonic and Neopythagorean versions of the *fall*, but with this key difference: for the Gnostics, the fallen one may wish to recognize God but is not able to do so.[18] The Apologists, by contrast, offer a philosophical system for recognizing God and thus behaving consequently in a moral and Christian way. For the Apologists, God holds out the possibility of recognition, for the Gnostics, God holds out the possibility of revelation. To assess this philosophical terminology we have to know what the term *Gnostic fall* means and the rationale for its definition.

Should we follow the learned Einar Thomassen, who explores "the Valentinian protologies" for an understanding of "how plurality comes into being from oneness",[19] rather than for an understanding of the arrogance of sin? Possibly there are different points of view between the Gnostic and the philosopher.
I will revisit this theme later on as well, in conjunction with discussions of other aspects of apology.

The Apologists want to argue logically and thereby to convince. By contrast, the Gnostics want to proclaim their message mostly to their brothers, whose hearts they want to reach. They do so through the repetition of their myths or excerpts and paraphrases therefrom. And, of course, it could also be said that the use of the myth by a Gnostic is also intended to convince. However, there remains still one significant difference between the Gnostic treatment of the same subject employed by an Apologist in his arguments. Although containing traces of philosophical facts and philosophical terminol-

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den edition have rightly provided a number of parallels to this passage (299). The so called *fall* stands for high-handedness (arrogance) (75.35) and self-exaltation and "his expectation of comprehending the incomprehensible" (77.26-36). For my understanding that is the core of the Valentinian understanding of sin. Differently M.R. Desjardins, (*Sin in Valentinianism*, SBL.DS 108) stresses more "the human act or thought not in harmony with the supreme God" (128) and insofar accentuates the human doing more than the being in Pauline ἁμαρτία.

[18] EvVer (NHC I,3) 22.27-33.

[19] E. Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed. The Church of the "Valentinians"*, Leiden 2006, 269-279 (269).

ogy (one God, one Logos and mediator to human souls, soteriology by knowledge), the Gnostic myth does not constitute philosophy. The decisive difference between a Gnostic and an Apologetic view of knowledge, moreover, is that the use of such a myth is not intended to teach any philosophical belief in the autonomy of the soul. On the contrary, it is intended precisely to show the opposite effect: in the Gnostic system, the Gnostic soul cannot catch the Father by her own endeavour and through her own strength. This difference between how the Apologists view knowledge and how the Gnostics view it is vast indeed. Later on Plotinus will say: "We have to convert our ability to perceive something □Ε ι□ς τὸ εἴσω (into our inner selves) and let it work there".[20]

Quite different the Gnostic theologians. For them, as we have heard, the aeons are in the father without being able to recognize him. Concerning this contradiction it is said in the text of the Gospel of Truth precisely: "It was a great wonder, that they were in the Father not knowing him [...]"[21] All aeons are in need of the father.[22] This need however cannot be rectified by intellectual or moral efforts, but only by the help of the Logos, which is a theological fact. The *need* is equivalent with the abrupt breaking away of the aeons from their origin, a breaking away which in some Gnostic texts is precisely described as a fall. This *fall* happens so abruptly that it cannot be compared with a gradual decline of the mind in middle and neo-Platonism. The distance (διάστημα) between the origin and the souls there is neither gradual nor a principal one. Although Plotinus describes the *fall* of the soul with a negative connotation[23], it is not to be identified with sin as in Gnostic texts. In Platonic writings the *fall* remains an open question, whether the fall of the soul is to be understood as an act of freedom or the dialectic penetration of necessity and freedom. We cannot answer the question why the

[20] Plot., Enn. 5.1,12,13f. Cf. W. Beierwaltes, *Plotin, Über Ewigkeit und Zeit* (Enn III,7), übersetzt, eingeleitet und kommentiert, Frankfurt ³1981, 75-86.

[21] EvVer (NHC I,3) 22.27-29.

[22] EvVer (NHC I,3) 18.35; 19.9f.; 21.14-18.

[23] Plot., Enn. 3.7,11,7 discussing the question, why the soul fell out of the Mind. Cf. W. Beierwaltes, 1981, 244-246.

νοῦς in the Platonic understanding did not stay with himself, just as the question, why the ἕν is not satisfied with himself.

In Gnostic texts, however, the reason for this falling out of the souls is the sinful, arrogant desire to be more than they are and to emulate the Father. In the Gnostic view, the fall is sin and must be punished. Here we may explain why the one, the origin, dismissed the aeons from itself. Here we definitely have to do with an act of punishment for sin and arrogance.

Gnostic preaching as comforting messages addresses itself exactly to the discomfort of the situation. Because the *fall* can only be healed by God's mercy the Gnostics are thankfully listening to and gratefully answering this message. Our interpretation of the Gnostic mythologomenon of the fall of the souls is thereby confirmed.

So we may conclude as follows: in spite of structural similarities, we are confronted with two different views of God and human beings, cosmos and salvation. At first, I could not detect apologetic motives in the Valentinian Gnostic texts, apart from the fact that Apologists as well as Gnostics are using a learned and philosophical terminology. Real theological parallels, however, do not exist. The philosophical structures are used in exactly the opposite way as in both systems and imply opposite consequences. This is as true for the apologists as it is for the Gnostics.

1.2.2. Anthropology and Ethics

The Gnostic view of anthropology corresponds with its theology: the human being needs knowledge of God but is not able to recognise God by himself. Man wants to have knowledge and therefore those who have achieved it are asked "to speak of the truth with those who search for it and of knowledge to those who have committed sin in their error."[24] The so-called sin has nothing to do with any moral or intellectual faults, with any intentional going astray. Sin is - as Paul says and here the Gnostics are Pauline theologians - to be in the state of man in ἁμαρτία, in the distance of God, in which they are not created but nevertheless find themselves in this world. The relationship to Pauline theology is very strong here, whereas the Apostolic fathers and the apologists as well do think differently.

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[24] EvVer (NHC I,3) 32.35-37.

For them sin is a moral fault which occurs because there is no pre-existence of the soul and therefore the soul as such is mortal and therefore undergoes death as punishment[25] or, conversely, it does not die at all, if it has achieved knowledge of God which is possible by endeavour and strength. All apologists utter this same line of reasoning accordingly. Their ethics, their way of life, distinguishes them from other people.

In this chapter, too, we can conclude that both groups, Gnostics and Apologists are both Christians, by all means, but understand their Christian faith in very different ways, and may be compared with the difference between Pauline and Matthean theology.

1.2.3. The Doctrine of the Logos and its Impact on Anthropoplogy

The Valentinian texts do not contain any determined doctrine of the logos which may contribute to the development of Christian theology. But, by contrast, this doctrine is the greatest accomplishment of the Apologist's theology, with which they have contributed to the development of future Christian dogmatics. On the basis of Platonic-Philonic understanding, they were able to create something totally new identifying the speculative mediator Logos, which was also known to the philosophers through the historical person of Christ. That then sets the tone for the ensuing development of the Christology. As Karlmann Beyschlag precisely defines:

> Der apologetische Logos-Christus ist also strenggenommen weder ein zeitlos-göttliches noch ein konkret geschichtliches Wesen, sondern eine Mixtur aus beidem, wobei es im Grunde offen bleibt, welcher der beiden Aspekte dogmatisch überwiegt.

He continues:

> Die Apologeten betonen die metaphysische Differenzierung von der Einheit zur Zweiheit, das heißt aber, sie erblicken das Wesen des Logos nicht primär am geschichtlichen Christus,

[25] Cf. e.g. Tatian, Or. 13.1-3.

> sondern projizieren gerade umgekehrt die geschichtliche Christusgestalt auf das Wesen des Logos, der als solcher die kosmische Weltordnung repräsentiert. Nicht das präexistente Logos-Wesen entgrenzt also die Personalität Christi (so das JohEv) sondern die Personalität Christi wird von der Wesensgröße des Logos assimiliert (so die Apologeten).[26]

Regarding the Gnostics, by contrast, we still have this perceptible identity between God - Father and God - Son, present in the frequent quotation of the Gospel of John with respect to Christology.[27]

The Gnostics do not yet understand or accept - and quite possibly are not even aware of - any metaphysical distinction between Father and Son, and certainly not in the same way as do the Apologists. Although the Son came forth of the Father,[28] he is neither separated from the Father nor identified with the concrete historical person of Christ. If we claim the being of Christ as discrete and autonomous as the specific contribution to Christian theology of the apologists, then we have to conclude that there can be no relationship between them and the Gnostics at all. They, the Gnostics, are not interested in a precise definition of the Christ-person with regard to his relationship to the Father, and thus do not make the same kind of contribution to Christian dogmatics as do the Apologists.[29]

But both Gnostics and apologists intimately knew the effect of Christ, as we have seen: for the apologists Christ is the one and

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[26] K. Beyschlag, *Grundriss der Dogmengeschichte. Vol. 1. Gott und Welt*, Darmstadt 1982, 111f.

[27] "The name of the Father is the Son". (cf. Jn 12:28); "It is he (the Father) who first gave a name to the one who came forth from him who was himself and he begot him as son. He gave him his name, which belonged to him" (cf. Jn 17:11f.) "he is the one to whom belongs all that exists around him, the Father" (EvVer [NHC I,3] 38.6-13).

[28] EvVer (NHC I,3) 38.1.

[29] That may be different with Sethinianism. See the interesting article of K. Corrigan, *Platonism and Gnosticism. The Anonymous Commentary on the Parmenides, Middle or Neoplatonic?* in: J.D.Turner / R. Majercik (eds.), *Gnosticism and Later Platonism. Themes, Figures and Texts*, SBL. Symposium Series 12, Atlanta 2000,141-177; Cf. J.D.Turner, *The Setting of the Platonizing Sethian Texts in Middle Platonism*, in: *Gnosticism and later Platonism*, Atlanta 2000, 179-224.

entire Logos, the Dynamis of the Father,[30] the Logos of the world. For the Gnostics the Logos is necessary for salvation too, but they do not offer a Logos-Speculation. The different function of Christ in the Eastern and Western school of Valentinianism already makes clear why there cannot exist a systematic Logos-Speculation. In the eastern school Christ saves the Pneumatics by "mutual participation," as Thomassen has recently taught us;[31] in the Western school he saves the Psychics, for the Pneumatics do not need salvation. Such a nonuniform salvation theory differs decisively from the apologetic Christology which is mostly uniform. Because of the fact that the Christ is incarnated in the body, suffers and needs to be redeemed himself (through being baptized), we may conclude finally that a systematic Logos-Speculation does not fall within the framework of the interests of the Valentinian Gnostic theologians.

1.2.4. The Meaning of Philosophy for Both Systems

This is a decisive point for me. While apologetic theologians did use well-known philosophical Platonic and Stoic patterns as a basis for their Christology, altering them in the above mentioned ways, the Valentinans are interested in Neopythagorean philosophy, as again Einar Thomassen has recently shown. But just here in my view the difference between philosophy and gnosis becomes very clear and should not be blurred or explained away. While for the apologists the Logos belonging to the Christians is the entire and undivided Logos and insofar something new compared with its origin, for the Gnostics the same is not valid.

Let us take (along with Thomassen)[32] the Neopythagorean Moderatos. He derives everything, even matter itself, from a single origin - the Monad. Matter results by gradually detaching from the first ἓν which is above Being, the second One which is the truly existent to the third which is the soul-realm, "while the lowest nature which comes after it, that of the sense-realm" is a shadow only and manifests itself primarily in Quantity [...]. Matter is created because the ἐνιαίος λόγος, by withdrawing itself, left room (ἐχωρησε)

[30] Just., 2 apol. 10.8.

[31] Thomassen, 2006, 270-279.

[32] Thomassen, 2006, 270-279.

for Quantity depriving it of all its logoi and forms. Therefore this Quantity is shapeless, undifferentiated and devoid of form.[33]

Thomassen draws a parallel with Gnostic theology which he confesses to understand better through a comparison with the philosopher: "In fact, many details in the various versions of the Sophia story acquire new significance once they are read as allegories of Neopythagorean physical theory."[34]

But is that really so? The Neopythagorean Moderatos offers a systematical gradual derivation of plurality from oneness. That is quite different from the Gnostics whose first intention in my view has not been to "explain how plurality comes into being from oneness." But as important as this philosophumenon may have been for the Gnostics, it does not comprise the element of sin, of *fall* and guilty arrogance of one of the aeons. This phenomenon of a sudden *fall* is quite different from a gradual process as Moderatos is describing it. I do not see a connection between the philosopher and the Valentinians, unless we may not assume that they formed their theology in a clear and carefully considered contradiction to the philosophical physical theory.

In Gnostic theology we are dealing with the sudden "fall" that has negated the original plan of the Father and that makes necessary the following soteriology. The Neopythagorean theory may have been important for the Valentinians - I admit - but only in contradiction to the ideas of the philosophers. At the most by transforming the Neopythagorean physical theory the Valentinians worked out their Chistian theology. Thus they may be compared with the apologetic use of philosophy, which was also transformed in its philosophical basis. The Gnostics explain sin and salvation by doing so. Moderatos scarcely would have understood what redemption and salvation could have meant in connection with his system, which is to be understood logically and systematically and perhaps in a religious way.

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[33] Thomassen, 2006, 271.

[34] Thomassen, 2006, 273. Cf. H. Dörrie / M. Baltes (eds.), *Der Platonismus in der Antike. Grundlagen. System. Entwicklung, Vol. 4. Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus. Einige grundlegende Axiome / Platonische Physik (im antiken Verständnis)*, Stuttgart 1996, 176-178. 477-485.

The apologists may have understood it better and yet there is a deep valley between their theology and Gnosticism, and especially between Christian theology and philosophy.[35]

1.3. Conclusion: Consequences of a Comparison between Apologists and Gnostics

Apologists and Valentinian Gnostics are Christians in contrast to the contemporary philosophers whose systems they use without taking over the corresponding consequences. Gnostics find themselves - as Pauline theologians - in ἁμαρτία. The protological fall has consequences for every Gnostic in the world; that is, that he cannot reach God, the Father, by his own efforts, nor can he search for him on his own. He has to be saved rather by a move of grace of the Father, who through his Son seeks to tear him out of his Archontic body.[36] The grace of God is a gift for him and he has to receive it in humility, obeisance and smallness. The lowliness and humility of the Gnostic symbolizes the fact that he does not exist by virtue of his own power and efforts, but rather because God and only God has chosen him.

By contrast, the Apologists do not and cannot present themselves as small and humble people. They want to proclaim their message of the Logos to all the world, an act which is only possible for self-confident messengers. They take pride in their proclamation, which would not be served by humility.

The apologetic Logos-speculation is taken over by the early Catholic Church and has an enormous impact on its dogmatics. The Gnostic draft disappeared, although the Gnostic anthropology of receiving the grace deserved more and better attention. Ironically only Irenaeus seems to have been influenced by it, although he would not have admitted that.[37] Yet, the contentious question, if there are apologetic traces in Gnostic texts is a legitimate one.

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[35] Cf. B. Aland, *Gnosis zwischen Christentum und Platonismus*, forthcoming 2008 in FS D.A. Koch.

[36] Inter (NHC XI,1) 18.30f.

[37] Cf. Iren., haer. 5.

2. Aspects of Comparability

We now pass to the second part of our lecture, that is the question how much discovery and insight would be lost if we were to abandon the search for apologetic motives in Gnostic texts.

Despite all of the differences between the two groups of texts, there are comparable structures in both texts. For example, the addressees, even as different as they seem to be, show similarities; the self-confident claim both groups maintain for their message are equally similar; and the character of insight and recognition of God as well as the ethics following from that also show similarities. Thus, in all these aspects, there is a visible and accountable similarity between them.

The addressees seem to be different at first sight, but we may not forget that Gnostics, too, make it their duty to convert Christians who belong to Christian communities[38] to a greater belief, but pagans too, especially pagan philosophers.[39] The sharp polemics of Plotinus against the Gnostics[40] are conceivable only if we consider a long discussion between those who formerly were friends of Plotinus' circle, the Gnostics, and Plotinus himself who is unable to understand this going astray of his former friends.

Mostly the addressees seem to be people from Christian communities where it seems equally meaningful to do missionary work. Gnostics know the mode of speaking and the underlying ideology which Christians as well as Gnostics might have used. A good example of that is Irenäus' polemic against the Gnostics. He attacks them because they want to attract members of the Church, imitating the sermons of the Church.[41]

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[38] Iren., haer 3.15,2; 16,8. Cf. K. Koschorke 1978.

[39] Cf. UW (NH II,5); Eug (NH III,3; V,1). Both texts are written for learned readers which may not indicate that they are meant as missionary texts. Much work has to do in future to understand better, what exactly is the protreptic and apologetic intention in Gnostic texts.

[40] Plot., Enn. 2.9.

[41] Iren., haer. 3.15,2.

Behind that we detect clear traces of apologetic missionary work in Gnostic circles. They try to gain trust for their convictions, a point that is valid for apologists too. They want to advertise for their Christian faith and do so by using contemporary philosophical arguments, as we have seen. Thus Gnostics and apologists do have something in common: both of them try to convince their addressees that their convictions are the right ones and only the right ones. But that is valid only under the following condition. Both, Gnostics and apologists as well, claim to possess the highest truth alone. Both of them make it their duty to speak of this truth, a truth which is beyond the conviction of the church, beyond the god of the philosophers and pagan rationality. Regarding this strong belief and its consequences Gnostics and apologists are comparable to each other. And here is the reason why they have to proclaim their message: both of them most strongly support this opinion of the highest God as going beyond all other religious conceptions. And as a result we find so many polemics and apologetics in the Christian groups themselves preaching different conceptions of truth.

Lastly, there seems to be a different path to insight and recognition of God with Gnostics and apologists. But is that really so? For many gnostic texts recognition is caused by God's revealing mercy, and only the so-called chosen ones are able to perceive God's insight and come in the end to the Pleroma. They have both to behave accordingly and do missionary work as well. The Apologists by contrast, claim to have insight into God too, and rightly so, but not so much because a revelation is bestowed on them but owing to rational endeavour and insight which principally is available to everybody. Therefore it is very important that they fulfil their proclamations through missionary preaching. If we ask who it is who helps the Apologists to achieve insight into God, we have to answer: it is the truth, it is God himself. Strangely enough but consequently this answer is quite similar to that of the Gnostic theologians. Although we have seen that Apologists do not work with visions and revelations - that would not be appropriate for their missionary work, for they wish to convince rationally - for them, the apologists, too, as for the Gnostics as well, it makes sense that they cannot achieve insight into God by their own strength, since by definition,

the virtue of God lies in an apprehension of his power and mercy. They have to be attracted by God who is the truth himself.

And this may be the most important point of comparison between Gnostics and Apologists and reveals the core of our problem, showing both groups as Christians to be nearer than their polemics would lead us to expect.

Traces of Apologetics in Rabbinic Literature

Friedrich Avemarie

1. The Non-apologetic Character of Rabbinic Writings

It may seem somewhat surprising that a volume on apologetics in antiquity should include an article dealing with the literature of abbinic Judaism, since rabbinic writings, such as the Mishnah, the Talmuds and the numerous midrashim, are commonly not in the remotest sense regarded as apologetic. Lexicon articles on Jewish apologetics treat the talmudic period only in brief[1] or pass it over altogether,[2] modern research on ancient Jewish apologetics usually confines itself to the Greek writings of the earlier diaspora Judaism,[3]

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[1] Cf. J. Bergmann, *Apologetik und Apologeten*, in: EJ(D) 2 (1928), 1176-1194 (1178); [anon.], *Apologetics*, in: EJ 3 (1972), 188-200 (190f.). Bergmann mentions rabbinic knowledge of the slanderous Greco-Egyptian legend that the Jews were expelled from Egypt because they were lepers (BerR 88:1, Theodor / Albeck, 1077), but observes that the rabbis in general took greater interest in the internal development of the Jewish legal tradition than in an outward defence. The anonymous article in the English *Encyclopaedia Judaica* adds a reference to dialogues between Jewish sages and Non-Jews, as will be treated below.

[2] Cf. P.W. van der Horst / J. Dan, *Apologetik II. Judentum*, in: [4]RGG 1 (1998), 612-614; [editorial] *Apologetics*, in: R.J.Z. Werblowsky / G. Wigoder (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, New York 1997, 56f. (leaping from Josephus to Yehudah ha-Levi and Maimonides).

[3] This holds from M. Friedländer, *Geschichte der jüdischen Apologetik als Vorgeschichte des Christentums. Eine historisch-kritische Darstellung der Propaganda und Apologie im Alten Testament und in der hellenistischen Diaspora*, Zürich 1903 (which contains, however, on p. 286f. a short section on dialogues with non-Jews in rabbinic writings), down to E. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism. The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, Hellenistic Culture and Society 30, Berkeley 1998; cf. A.K. Petersen, *Jødisk apologetik - forskningshistorisk og historisk*, in: A.K. Petersen / J. Hyldahl / K.S. Fuglseth (eds.), *Perspektiver på Jødisk*

and the following lines will by no means try to challenge the prevailing view. Occasional traces of an apologetic attitude, or perhaps just sensitivity, is all that rabbinic writings will yield. Nevertheless, a look at a body of literature that is essentially non-apologetic may prove quite helpful in the current discussion, as it can show from the outside that the much-debated[4] category of 'apologetics' is still of considerable heuristic value.

The non-apologetic nature of rabbinic writings reveals itself at even the most superficial comparison. Ancient *Christian* apologies[5] characteristically begin with an address to a non-Christian audience, mostly a Roman emperor[6] or, more generally, the 'Greeks';[7] then eloquently explain their purpose, which consists of a defence[8] of Christi-

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Apologetik, København 2007, 15-43. Rabbinic Judaism is also absent from the table of contents of M. Edwards / M. Goodman / S. Price / C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, Oxford 1999.

[4] Cf. the discussion by A.K. Petersen, *The Diversity of Apologetics. From Genre to a Mode of Thinking* (in this volume).

[5] For the sake of simplicity, the subsequent examples are confined to writings which, following the use of ἀπολογία in Eus., h.e. 4.3,1 etc., are generally recognized as specimens of (2nd century) Christian apologetics; cf. L.W. Barnard, *Apologetik I. Alte Kirche*, in: TRE 3 (1978), 317-411 (374-885 and 402f.); O. Skarsaune, *Apologie, literarisch*, in: 4RGG 1 (1998), 630-632 (631); M. Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum. Die Kontroverse um den christlichen Wahrheitsanspruch in den ersten Jahrhunderten*, Paderborn 2001, 18-20; A.-C. Jacobsen, *Main Topics in Early Christian Apologetics* (in this volume).

[6] Cf. Quad., in Eus., h.e. 4.3,1 (Hadrian); Arist., apol., *inscriptio* (Antoninus Pius; Hennecke 1); Just., 1 apol. 1.1 (Antoninus Pius and his son, 'Caesar Verissimus' = Marcus Aurelius; Marcovich 31); Mel., in Eus., h.e. 4.26,2 (Antoninus = Marcus Aurelius); Athenag., leg., *inscriptio* (Marcus Aurelius and Commodus; Marcovich 21). Tert., apol. 1.1, is less specifically addressed to the *Romani imperii antistites* (Becker, 54).

[7] Cf. Tat., orat. 1.1 (Goodspeed 268). Just., 1 apol. 1.1 (Marcovich 31) includes in his address to the Roman emperors 'the holy senate and all the people of the Romans'. Addresses to 'the Greek' are also found in Ps.- Just., coh. Gr. 1.1 and or. Gr. 1.1 (Marcovich 23 and 109), the 'apologetic' character of which, however, may seem debatable.

[8] The purpose of defence is made explicit in Just., 1 apol. 3 etc.; Athenag., leg. 1.3; Tert., apol. 1.1.

anity in the face of all sorts of calumnies,[9] violence and persecution;[10] and depending on the degree of internal consistency, their argumentation mainly draws on reason,[11] common sense and factual evidence, whilst recourse to the Bible and other peculiarities of Christian doctrine is eschewed.[12] Whether these features add up to a literary genre or not,[13] it is quite obvious that the ancient rabbinic writings are devoid of all these features. Rabbinic literature aims at an audience which shares its world view and its basic religious convictions; it was not written in response to foreign hostility; and rather than avoiding the use of the Bible and doctrinal concepts, its reasoning essentially depends on them. It is a literature for experts, requiring a command of both Hebrew and Aramaic, a thorough knowledge of biblical and post-biblical traditions, and a sound familiarity with a variety of specific literary styles and patterns.

If one opens, e.g., *Bereshit Rabbah*, a classical piece of 'haggadic midrash', one will immediately sense the indifference to and, in fact, seclusion from Greco-Roman culture that is characteristic of rabbinic writings. The discrepancy between prefaces to apologies

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[9] Slander or hatred are mentioned, e.g., in Arist., apol. 17; Just., 1 apol. 1 and elsewhere; Tat., orat. 1,1; Mel., in Eus., h.e. 4.26,5 and 4.26,9; Athenag., leg. 1.4, 2.4, 3.1; Tert., apol. 1.4-9.

[10] Persecution or other forms of aggression are mentioned, e.g., in Arist., apol. 17; Just., 1 apol. 7; Mel., in Eus., h.e. 4.26,5; Athenag., leg. 1.3-4; Tert., apol. 1.12.

[11] Appeal to reason is explicitly made by Just., 1 apol. 2.1 and elsewhere. Cf. O. Skarsaune, *Apologetik IV. Kirchengeschichtlich, 1. Alte Kirche*, in: ⁴RGG 1 (1998), 616-620 (616).

[12] For the lack of Bible references see B. Kytzler in his introduction to M. Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, München 1965, 26. An apologetic use of biblical evidence is found, however, in Justin; cf. Skarsaune, 1998, 618; id., *The Proof from Prophecy. A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile*, NT.S 56, Leiden 1987.

[13] A case for a literary genre can presumably be made of the addresses to non-Christian public authorities, the mention of accusations and the purpose of defence; by such features, these apologies show themselves to be variations of either petitions (cf. Skarsaune, 1998, 630; W. Kinzig, *Der "Sitz im Leben" der Apologie in der Alten Kirche*, ZKG 100 [1989], 219-317) or speeches in court (cf. Petersen, *The Diversity of Apologetics. From Genre to a Mode of Thinking* (in this volume).

such as those of Justin or Tertullian and the beginning of this midrash could hardly be greater:

בראשית ברא אלהים וגוי.
רי אושעיא פתח ואהיה אצלו אמון ואהיה שעשועים
אמון פידגוג אמון מכוסה אמון מוצנע אית דאמרי
רבתה.[14]

The Hebrew, including some Aramaic and even a Greek loan word (παιδαγωγός), means literally:

> 'In the beginning God created' etc.; R. Oshaya opened, 'And I was beside him *amon*, and I was delight.' *Amon* tutor, *amun* covered, *amun* guarded, and there are those who say, *amon* the great one.

The fourfold recurrence of אמון (*amon* or *amun*) suggests that the latter part of the passage offers a choice of interpretations of this term, and in the former part, one may recognize quotations from Gen 1:1 and Prov 8:30 (as indicated here by quotation marks), the latter of which supplies the key-word אמון. However, the relationship which *Bereshit Rabbah* is about to establish between these Bible quotations, as it is not suggested by any verbal or thematic overlap between the two verses, will become apparent only to readers who are sufficiently acquainted with the basic patterns of midrashic exegesis. Above all, they must know that the verb פתח[15] is meant to signal that a verse from the Prophets or Hagiographa is adduced in order to explore the deeper meaning of a verse of the Pentateuch. In our example from *Bereshit Rabbah*, this meaning is shown when, subsequently to the passage quoted above, it is pointed out that *amon*, which in Prov 8:30 relates to Wisdom and hence to the To-

[14] BerR 1:1 (Theodor / Albeck, 1f.; for the spelling of דאמרי see the *apparatus ad loc.*).

[15] Literally, 'to open'. In derivation from פתח, this pattern of midrashic exegesis is technically termed a *petihah*. Cf. A. Goldberg, *Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition und Struktur der Petiḥa*, in: id., *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung*, TSAJ 73, Tübingen 1999, 303-346.

rah, can also mean 'craftsman'. For as Prov 8:22 ('The Lord created[16] me as the beginning of his ways') shows that Wisdom can also be called ראשית, it follows that Gen 1:1 by its very first word בראשית refers to this creative rôle of the Torah: 'By means of ראשית - i.e., by means of the Torah - God created the heaven and the earth.'

That a Roman emperor or a Greek Church Father could have grasped the train of thought of this midrash text, even if he had been trying earnestly, seems virtually impossible. And it nearly goes without saying that the rest of rabbinic literature in this regard is no different from our example. The inaccessibility of this literature to outsiders is clearly incompatible with the purpose of an outward defence. Such writings are definitely non-apologetic.

Curiously enough, however, precisely this first paragraph of *Bereshit Rabbah* at the same time provides quite a prominent example for the possibility of an *implicit* rabbinic engagement with foreign views and claims. Considering the fact that R. Oshaya, the alleged author of this piece of exegesis, flourished in early third century Caesarea and thus was a neighbour to one of the most influential Church Fathers of the time, it is possible that the exegetic proof that Gen 1:1 by בראשית refers to the Torah is an implicit refutation of the Christian claim that God's instrument of creation was the divine Logos, who is Christ.[17] If one adopts a broader understanding of apologetics, i.e., if one does not tie this category to a literary genre but rather to an attitude, not to an explicit appeal to outsiders but rather to an engagement with challenges from outside, and not to the defence against slander and persecution, but more generally to the maintenance of one's own position (and, in fact, identity) against the claims of competing religious convictions,[18] then even

[16] Following the interpretation of the Targum *ad loc.*

[17] For a comparison of BerR 1:1 with pertinent passages in Origen see M.R. Niehoff, *Creatio ex Nihilo. Theology in* Genesis Rabbah *in Light of Christian Exegesis*, in: HThR 99 (2006), 37-64 (60-64). For further discussion and references cf. H.-F. Weiss, *Untersuchungen zur Kosmologie des hellenistischen und palästinischen Judentums*, TU 97, Berlin 1966, 294-304; F. Avemarie, *Tora und Leben. Untersuchungen zur Heilsbedeutung der Tora in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur*, TSAJ 55, Tübingen 1996, 54-56.

[18] For a plea for such a broader understanding of 'apologetic' see Petersen, *The Diversity of Apologetics. From Genre to a Mode of Thinking* (in this volume). It is already

a text like this passage from *Bereshit Rabbah* can reasonably be supposed to originate from an 'apologetic' setting. There remains, of course, the problem that the presumed apologetic momentum of this text is entirely implicit and can be discerned only by the help of foreign materials, such as patristic writings, and historical conjecture.[19] From the surface of the wording, apologetic is absent.[20]

However, the general non-apologetic character of rabbinic literature notwithstanding, there are quite a number of passages in which an apologetic setting, such as can be assumed to lie behind in R. Oshaya's exegesis of Gen 1:1, is made explicit. Rather than being *addressed* to a non-rabbinic audience, though, such texts unfold the rabbinic responses to extraneous challenges within varying *narra-*

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presupposed if one counts writings such as the *Letter to Diognetus* or Minucius Felix' *Octavius* as apologetic literature.

[19] This problem, by the way, also impairs the fashionable thesis that the very formation of rabbinic Judaism was to a large extent a response to the challenge of nascent Christianity. With regard, e.g., to martyrdom, D. Boyarin, *Dying for God. Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, Stanford 1999, has made a fascinating case for the assumption that the rabbinic idea of martyrdom being a 'religious mandate per se' (95), as reflected particularly in traditions on the martyr death of R. Akiva (see below), developed under Christian influence; but all in all, his textual evidence is rather scant. Of course, one should be careful about drawing inferences from silence; however, if one directly compares ancient rabbinic with early Christian martyr traditions, one can easily notice a good deal of overlap in the descriptions of Roman methods and devices of torture and execution, but surprisingly little common ground in the theological interpretations of martyrdom, which suggests that both the ancient rabbis and the early Christians had a sound knowledge of the Roman penal system but took little note of their respective theologies.

[20] If one wants to speculate about *why* the rabbinic tradition did not develop an apologetic genre, the most likely reasons are the generally non-missionary character of rabbinic Judaism (hence also too small a number of converts who knew gentile piety from their own experience) and, as compared to Christianity, its greater geographical and cultural remoteness from the centres of the Greco-Roman world, including its preference for Hebrew and Aramaic rather than Greek or Latin. It should be kept in mind, however, that this is an argument from silence, since we do not know how much of the literary production of the ancient Palestinian rabbis has been lost.

tive frameworks. For the most part, they consist of dialogues - dialogues between pious Jews and Roman dignitaries, between rabbis and religious dissidents, or between Jewish martyrs and their pagan judges and torturers. To texts of this kind we now turn,[21] the guiding question being to what extent the apologetic sensitivity which is mirrored here links up with further traits that are characteristic of the apologetic literature of early Christianity and hellenistic Judaism.

2. Dialogues with Gentiles

Ancient rabbinic literature contains quite a number of haggadic pieces which basically consist of a dialogue between a gentile and a rabbi, the gentile posing a question concerning some peculiarity of Judaism, and the rabbi giving the authoritative answer. Typical pairs of such dialogue partners are a Roman governor (הגמון, ἡγεμών) and Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, an anonymous 'philosopher' and Rabban Gamliel, a Roman lady (מטרונה, *matrona*) and R. Yose ben Halafta, the emperor Hadrian and R. Yehoshua ben Hananiah, and an emperor named Antoninus and R. Yehudah ha-Nasi.[22] The stereotypical recurrence of these pairs leaves no doubt that behind the majority of these dialogues is a literary pattern rather than individual historical reminiscence.[23] However, the fact that those who pose the questions in

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[21] They were usually adduced also in earlier modern scholarship as evidence for rabbinic apologetics; cf. above no. 1 and 3.

[22] Cf. S. Krauss, *Antoninus und Rabbi*, Wien 1910; J. Neusner, *A Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai. Ca. 1-80 C.E.*, Leiden ²1970, 218-224; M.D. Herr, *The Historical Significance of the Dialogues between Jewish Sages and Roman Dignitaries*, in: J. Heinemann / D. Noy (eds.), *Studies in Aggadah and Folk-Literature*, ScrHie 22, Jerusalem 1971, 123-150; R. Gershenzon / E. Slomovic, *A Second Century Jewish-Gnostic Debate. Rabbi Jose Ben Halafta and the Matrona*, in: JSJ 16 (1985), 1-41; T. Ilan, *Matrona and Rabbi Jose. An Alternative Interpretation*, in: JSJ 25 (1994), 18-51; M. Jacobs, *Die Institution des jüdischen Patriarchen. Eine quellen- und traditionskritische Studie zur Geschichte der Juden in der Spätantike*, TSAJ 52, Tübingen 1995, 124-154. For a wide range of opinions regarding the identity of 'Antoninus', cf. W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, vol. 2, Straßburg 1890, 438 no. 2; Jacobs, 1995, 125-129.

[23] See Herr, 1971, 125f., who however admits that beside the 'historical phenomenon' of parts of these dialogues, 'a literary genre has also arisen' (126).

these dialogues are depicted as gentiles rather than disciples or other fellow Jews clearly reflects the awareness that there *were* non-Jews who were interested in Jewish beliefs, and that these beliefs could be substantiated by explanations that seemed reasonable even to those who did not share them.

A question which can easily be imagined to be a current issue between Jews and gentiles is that of the resurrection of the dead and the ultimate judgement.[24] Thus, in one of those dialogues,

> Antoninus said to Rabbi (i.e., R. Yehudah ha-Nasi): 'The body and the soul can free themselves from the judgement.' 'How so?' The body says: 'The soul has sinned, for since the day it left me I am lying in the grave like a dumb stone'. And the soul says: 'The body has sinned, for since the day I left it I am flying in the air like a bird.'

The rabbi then tells the parable of a king who appointed a blind and a lame man as guardians for his orchard, so that when nevertheless his figs were stolen, he could easily guess how these guardians had jointly committed the theft, and putting the lame again on the back of the blind, he punished them both. 'Thus the Holy One, blessed be He, will bring the soul and throw it into the body and judge them together.'[25]

Whilst in this case, there is required little more on the gentile part than the notion that Jews believe in postmortal retribution,[26] other dialogues presuppose quite an intimate acquaintance with Jewish learning. Thus the 'hegemon Antigonos' points to an apparent inconsistency in the taxation which according to Ex 38:24-31 was carried out for the making of the holy vessels, and reproaches Moses of being either a thief or a bad mathematician, so that Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai succeeds only by a lengthy calculation in refut-

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[24] It was a prominent issue also in ancient Christian apologies; cf. Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 269-271.

[25] bSan 91a-b. For parallels, see MekhJ Shirata 2 on Ex 15:1 (Horovitz / Rabin, 125); WaR 4:5 (Margulies, 88f.); TanB Wayyiqra 12 (Buber, 4b).

[26] The same may hold for a dialogue between the 'matrona' and R. Jose ben Halafta on the question of why circumcision was not included in the Ten Commandments; cf. PesR 23 (Friedmann, 117a); Gershenzon / Slomovic, 1985, 36.

ing this slanderous allegation.[27] Quite obviously, such an argument is due far more to exegetical sophistication than to an apologetic challenge, even though the readiness of the rabbinic mind to imagine the matter as a case of apologetics cannot be denied.

Nevertheless, with the rise of a gentile Christianity, the possibility of non-Jews studying the Bible became increasingly realistic.[28] It should not, therefore, be assumed that dialogues dealing with exegetical matters as a rule reflect purely inner-rabbinic discussions. A fine counter-example can be found in a debate on the curious fact that the phrase 'And God saw that it was good', which (in this or similar form) regularly comments the daily portions of God's creative work in Genesis 1,[29] is absent from the account of the second day, Gen 1:6-8:

> A lady (מטרונה) asked R. Yose, 'Why is it not written in connection with the second (day), *That it was good?* He said to her, 'Even though (it is not written here, Scripture) returned and gathered all of them up at the end, as it says, *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good* (Gen 1:31).' She told him a parable: '(Supposing) six men came to you and you gave each of them a *mina* [i.e. 100 *denarii*], but to one of them you didn't, and (then) you returned and gave a *mina* to all of them, would not then each have a *mina* and a sixth, but one (only) a sixth?' He returned and said to her, in accordance with what R. Shmuel bar Nahman had said, 'Since the work of the waters was not finished (on the second day), (the phrase) *That it was good* is written twice in (the account of) the third (day), once relating to the work of the waters (Gen 1:10) and once relating to the work of (that) day (Gen 1:12).'[30]

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[27] jSan 1.2,60-61 (Schäfer / Becker, 4, 164).

[28] Whilst prior to Celsus and Porphyry, knowledge of the Bible among gentiles was superficial at best, the "rise and spread of Christianity in the second century", according to J.G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, STAC 23, Tübingen 2004, 53, "provided an impetus for 'outsiders' to finally take a close look at the LXX".

[29] Cf. Gen 1:4.10.12.18.21.25.31.

[30] BerR 4:6 (Theodor / Albeck, 30).

The absence of the said phrase from the account of the second day is all the more remarkable as the Septuagint *includes* it in due place, Gen 1:8. This curious discrepancy did not remain unnoticed by the Church Fathers; among others, it is mentioned by Origen, who observes that 'for them (i.e., the 'Hebrews'), this is no little problem.'[31] Thus it seems quite possible that this dialogue between R. Yose ben Halafta and the *matrona* is informed not only by a scholarly concern of the rabbis themselves, but also by the awareness that such a difficulty, embarrassingly enough, was likewise known among Christians.

However, this awareness notwithstanding, the rabbis can hardly have expected their teachings and writings actually to be noticed by a non-Jewish audience. Far from attending a *bet midrash*, even Jerome - and I know of no other gentile in late antiquity who had a keener interest in rabbinic lore - received his training in Hebrew only in private lessons and only at night, for, as he says, his teacher, a certain Bar Hanina, was afraid of his fellow Jews.[32] From the perspective of the rabbis, things were of course different; here, it was not hostility but the very exigencies of the study of Torah itself which hindered their teaching from reaching non-Jews, the result, however, being the same. The unlikelihood of gentiles submitting themselves to a rabbinic education may be illustrated by the following story of two Romans attending the lectures of Rabban Gamliel:

> Once the (Roman) government commissioned two soldiers, telling them, 'Go and make yourselves Jews and find out what is the nature of their Torah.' They went to Rabban Gamliel at Usha and read the Bible and studied the Mishnah, midrash, halakhot and haggadot. At their departure they said, 'The whole Torah is fine and praiseworthy, except for one thing,

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[31] Or., ep. 1 (*ad Africanum*), 7 (de Lange, SC 302, 530); cf. Jerome., ep. 49.19 (Labourt 2,146); Ephraem, *In Genesim* (Tonneau, CSCO.S 153 = 72:14); L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, vol. 5, Philadelphia 1955, 18f. no. 54; Gershenzon / Slomovic, 1985, 18-19; C. Markschies, *Hieronymus und die "Hebraica Veritas". Ein Beitrag zur Archäologie des protestantischen Schriftverständnisses*, in: M. Hengel / A.M. Schwemer (eds.), *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum*, WUNT 72, Tübingen 1994, 131-181 (148).

[32] Jerome., ep. 84.3 (Labourt 4,127); cf. Markschies, 1994, 145.

> (and) this is that you say, *Property stolen from a gentile is permitted (for use), but (property stolen) from a Jew is forbidden.* But concerning this we shall not inform the government.'[33]

As it seems, the rabbis were quite confident that their teachings could stand an assessment by impartial gentile observers. A parallel version has Rabban Gamliel respond to the objection of the Roman officials by a generous change of that ruling they had contested.[34] However, who would be willing to undertake such an assessment, which meant studying Bible, Mishnah and a good many other things? The two officials do not study voluntarily but perform their duty. It may be implied, of course, that they had been sent for reasons of political suspicion, and this is reminiscent of circumstances which prompted apologies in early Christianity. However, the idea that political suspicion could be refuted by writings based on a common sense argumentation rather than by a thorough study of halakhah and haggadah apparently did not occur to the rabbis.

That superficial curiosity was deemed insufficient as a motive for obtaining insight can be seen from the last example to be adduced here of a dialogue between a gentile and a rabbi. It differs from the previous ones in that it involves, as a third party, the disciples of the rabbi. Its topic is the use of purification water, which according to Num 19 is to be prepared from the ashes of a red heifer:

> A gentile (גוי) asked Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai (and) said to him, 'These things that you do look like some kind of witchcraft. They bring a heifer and slaughter it and burn it and grind it and take its ashes, and (if) one of you is defiled by a dead body, they sprinkle upon him two or three drops and say, 'You have become pure'.' He said to him, 'Did there never enter a spirit of frenzy into you?' He said to him, 'No.' He said to him, 'But did you never see anybody else whom a spirit of frenzy had entered?' He said to him, 'Yes.' He said to him, 'So what do you do (then)?' He said to him, 'They bring roots and raise smoke under him and sprinkle water

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[33] SifDev 344 (Finkelstein, 401); for parallels, see bBQ 38a and the following footnote.

[34] jBQ 4:3/3 (Schäfer / Becker, 4, 24).

> on him[35], and it flees.' He said to him, 'Now, won't your ears listen to what you mouth has said? This spirit, thus, is a spirit of uncleanness, as it is written, *and also the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness etc.* (Sach 13:2).' When (the gentile) had left, his disciples said to him, 'Our master, you pushed this one away with a reed, (but) what will you reply to us?' He said to them, 'By your life! Neither does a corpse defile nor does water purify, but it is a decree of the Holy One, blessed be He. The Holy One, blessed be He, said, *I made a statute, I issued a decree, and you are not permitted to infringe on my decree!', (as it says,) 'This is the statute of the Torah'* (Num 19:1).[36]

The first part of this narrative closely resembles in its form the dialogues mentioned before, except, perhaps, for the fact that Rabban Yohanan adopts a somewhat more condescending attitude toward the gentile than, e.g., R. Yose ben Halafta, who at one point even yields to his interlocutor. As regards the contents, however, it exhibits a good deal more of the traits that should be expected of an apology than those other dialogues: Rabban Yohanan appeals to the experience of his addressee, he avoids scholarly sophistication and expert knowledge, and his resort to the Bible is marginal. Nevertheless, his condescendence already anticipates the second part of the story. For here it becomes apparent that his answer, though having satisfied the gentile, is inadequate, its weakness being evident even to the disciples. The rabbi knows of an explanation which is much more to the point, but does not consider it fit for a gentile. The obvious implication is that true insight is possible only within the rabbinic community. Therefore, the enlightenment of outsiders seems futile from the outset.

We may summarize, then, that the rabbinic tradition displays a healthy awareness of gentile curiosity and even interest in Jewish beliefs, but serious attempts to reformulate these beliefs so as to make them accessible to gentiles have not been made, or, if they

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[35] According to the reading of MS Oxford Neubauer 2334-2411.

[36] PesK 4:7 (Mandelbaum, 74); with parallels in BemR 19:4; TanB Huqqat 26 (Buber, 59b-60a); PesR 14 (Friedmann, 65a); cf. Neusner, ²1970, 91f.; Avemarie, 1996, 205f.

were made, have not left any traces in the writings that have come down to us. If early Christian apologies have been thought to be directed more to a Christian audience than to the emperors they mention in their prefaces,[37] answers to gentile interlocutors found in rabbinic texts all the more so respond to the needs of a Jewish readership rather than to non-Jewish thirst for knowledge. The *matrona* or the emperor simply serve to represent the otherness that is needed for shaping the own, Jewish, belief and identity.

3. Martyrs on Trial

The trial of a martyr is the apologetic setting par excellence. Unlike a book, which can be ignored, the martyr directly faces a judge, and the judge's task is precisely that hostile scrutiny to which apologetic writing responds and which it aims to vanquish. Hence, as much as forensic settings are evoked in the introductions of various early Christian apologies,[38] and fictitious speeches on behalf of the accused Socrates had been written by pre-Christian philosophers,[39] there are also early Christian martyr narratives which contain speeches of defence testifying to the basics of Christian faith and ethics,[40] even

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[37] Cf. A. Kostergaard Petersen, *Diversity* (in this volume), who refers also to observations which already V.A. Tcherikover had made with regard to the literature of Alexandrian Judaism.

[38] This holds particularly for Athenag., leg. 2.1-3.1; Mel., in Eus., h.e. 4.26,6; Tert., apol. 1.1; cf. above no. 13.

[39] Cf. Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 19; A. Kostergaard Petersen, *Diversity* (in this volume).

[40] It may suffice to note some examples from H. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford 1972: Justin confesses his faith in the Creator and his Son, who had been announced by the prophets (A 2.5-7, B 2.5-7, cf. C 2.3 on pages 42-44, 48, 56); Speratus maintains his innocence and the invisibility of God (*Passio SS. Scilitanorum* 2,6 on page 86); Apollonius mentions, apart from certain basic beliefs, the daily intercession of the Christians on behalf of the emperor, calls his speech an ἀπολογία and makes also reference to Socrates (4-6. 8-9. 36-37. 41 on pages 90-92.100); Pionius is likewise said to have delivered an apology, which, however, in view of the many Jews in his audience is replete with references to the Old Testament (4.2-24 on pages 138-142). For a detailed comparison of the treatment of particular charges against Christians in apologies and martyr narratives, see J. Engberg, *Truth begs no favours - Martyr-Literature and Apologetics* (in this volume).

though in the reality of Roman court proceedings Christian confessors were hardly left room for any elaborate self-defence.[41]

Rabbinic Judaism, however, differs from early Christianity in this regard, too. Its martyr traditions are much fewer, and hardly any of them contains a defence of the Jewish cause vis-à-vis an oppressor. A rare example is the story of the martyrdom of Miriam bat Tanhum and her seven sons, a story quite similar to that of 2Macc 7 and presumably dependent on it.[42] The plot consists of the seven brothers each in turn being urged to prostrate themselves before an idol, and, upon their refusal, being led to execution. Each of them buttresses his refusal by a confession of his faith in the God of Israel. The section dealing with the first brother reads as follows:

> [The tyrant] brought out the first and said to him, 'Prostrate yourself before the image as your brothers did!' He said to him, 'Heaven forbid! My brothers did not prostrate themselves, so I shall not prostrate myself before it either. He said to him, 'Why?' [He answered,] 'Because it is written in the Torah, *I am the Lord your God* (Ex 20:2).' He gave the order to kill him.[43]

For the subsequent five brothers this pattern is repeated, with only the biblical proof texts changing. The seventh brother, a mere child, is credited with a broader scene.[44] After his refusal, he is encouraged to save his life by merely feigning a prostration, but he declines. Then he gives a lengthy exposition of Ps 115:4-7 ('Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands' etc.) which contrasts

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[41] Cf. Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 18f. This, however, did not exclude mutual literary influence between apologies and martyr narratives (cf. ibid. 32), as is reflected most impressively in the *Acta Apollonii*, cf. H. Paulsen, *Erwägungen zu Acta Apollonii 14-22*, in: ZNW 66 (1975), 117-126.

[42] EkhaR 1:16 (Buber, 42b); bGit 57b; PesR 43 (Friedmann, 180b); for the dependence on 2Macc 7 cf. R. Doran, *The Martyr. A Synoptic View of the Mother and Her Seven Sons*, in: J.J. Collins / G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds.), *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism. Profiles and Paradigms*, SCSt 12, Chico 1980, 189-221.

[43] EkhaR 1:16 (Buber, 42b).

[44] This is a further notable feature which this rabbinic text shares with 2Macc 7.

the impotence of the pagan idols with the power of the God of Israel. Upon the tyrant's question of why this God would not come and rescue him, he confesses to being guilty and deserving of death, but predicts a violent end to the oppressor too.[45]

The apologetic character of this discourse is obvious. It is striking, however, that its theological point has little to do with what was at issue in the actual clashes between Jews and Roman authorities in rabbinic times. In the wake of the Bar Kokhba war, Jews in Palestine are reported to have been persecuted for circumcising their sons, studying the Torah or practising Jewish festive rituals.[46] But nothing is heard of attempts to make them worship idols or, more generally, abandon their Jewish monotheism.[47] The apologetic tenor of this narrative is therefore hardly an echo of the menaces to which the rabbis themselves were exposed. True, it conveys the firm conviction that the Jewish faith, if put on trial, can be maintained and accounted for, but a case for details, such as circumcision, the Sabbath or the study of the Torah, is not being made.

One might perhaps expect that traditions of *rabbis* who died a martyr's death pay a bit more attention to apologetic issues. However, virtually all of them display an utter disinterest. The rôle which they accord to the foreign oppressors is marginal at best,[48]

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[45] EkhaR 1:16 (Buber, 42b-43a). The last part of the dialogue figures also in the tradition on Pappus and Lulianus, two victims of Roman oppression in the 2nd century; cf. Sifra Emor, pereq 9:5 (Weiss, 99d).

[46] Cf. P. Schäfer, *Der Bar Kokhba-Aufstand. Studien zum zweiten jüdischen Krieg gegen Rom*, TSAJ 1, Tübingen 1981, 194-235. Apart from circumcision and Torah study, the observances that were suppressed included also the phylacteries, the *sukkah*, the *mezuzah*, the *Hanukkah* lamp, the reading of the *Megillah* and the keeping of the Sabbath; cf. ibid. 233.

[47] tAS 5(6):6 (Zuckermandel, 468) mentions 'pedestals (*viz.* of idols)' that were erected in times of persecution, which, however, does not imply that Jews had been forced to worship these idols; cf. Schäfer, 1981, 204f.

[48] The only case of a Roman statesman figuring more than marginally in an early rabbinic martyr narrative is that of Trajan in the tradition on Pappus and Lulianus (see above no. 45). The tyrant who orders the execution of the seven sons of Miriam bat Tanhum is anonymous in the ancient versions; only Seder Eliahu Rabbah, a post-talmudic writing, introduces him as 'Adrianus Caesar'; SER 30 (Friedmann, 151-153).

and such is the interest they take in the oppressors' views of the Jewish religion. An extreme example is the narrative of the execution of a certain R. Shimon and his colleague, R. Yishmael, which begins as follows:

> When R. Yishmael and R. Shimon were led out to be beheaded, R. Shimon said to R. Yishmael: 'Rabbi, my heart is fainting, as I do not know for what reason I am (going to be) beheaded.'[49]

The behaviour of R. Shimon is stunning, for the narrative surely implies that the impending execution was preceded by the verdict of an oppressor, a verdict which must have been known to the two victims. However, neither the oppressor nor the verdict plays any rôle in the story; they are not even mentioned. What R. Shimon ponders is the reason for which *God* has handed him over to this punishment. And indeed, subsequent introspection brings out the realization that he is guilty of having delayed the judgement for widows and orphans, a trespass which God in Ex 22:23 threatens to punish "with the sword". What the narrative wants to clarify is a problem in the relationship between a pious man and his God, not in the relationship between Jews and gentiles. Its concern is theodicy, not apologetics.

Mention of a gentile tyrant or the hostile 'empire' is made in the martyr narratives about R. Akiva. In the version of the *Jerusalem Talmud*,[50] the tyrant, whose name is given as 'Turnus Rufus',[51] is perplexed when he sees that R. Akiva, dreadfully tortured, nevertheless shows a smile. The rabbi replies that he smiles because his dying means the ultimate fulfilment of the command of loving God "with all one's life" (Deut 6:5). This is of course a highly impressive demonstration of Jewish faith.[52] Quite obviously, however, it is not meant as a defence against the charge for which the rabbi had been condemned. Indeed, this charge is not even mentioned. As it seems, this narrative, too, is void of any apologetic purpose.

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[49] MekhJ Neziqin 18, on Ex 22:22 (Horovitz / Rabin, 313).

[50] jBer 9:7/8 and jSota 5:7/6 (Schäfer / Becker, 1/1-2,250f. and 3,113f.).

[51] Which may be a variant spelling for either 'Tyrannos Rufus' or 'Tineius Rufus'.

[52] As has been lucidly expounded by Boyarin, 1999, 105-109.

In the *Talmud Bavli*[53] the offence for which R. Akiva had been seized by the Romans is specified; he had gathered public assemblies for the study of the Torah. In the course of the narrative he furthermore justifies his way of acting, and he does so by a parable: just as the fish cannot escape the net of the fishermen by leaving the water, so the Israelites cannot save their lives by abandoning the Torah, of which it is written, "This is your life and the length of your days" (Deut 30:20). However, he does not address this justification to a Roman governor, but to a fellow Jew who had cautioned him against his anti-Roman insubordination. The parable of the fish is thus appointed a function which indeed may be considered as apologetic. It is, however, a purely inner-Jewish apologetic. A gentile audience is not in view.

Now, do these observations allow any generalizing inferences? For a tentative conclusion, I would say that the rabbinic tradition, despite the apologetic awareness it displays in other contexts, had only a faint sensitivity for the apologetic potentiality of martyrdom. As it seems, the experience of being persecuted was not apt to call forth any apologetic responses. For a presentation of their Jewish beliefs to non-Jews, the rabbis obviously preferred peaceful settings to violent ones. The reason may be simply that curiosity, a benevolent interest and the prospect of possible agreement provide better ground for discussion than violent conflict, trial and torture.[54]

4. Attitudes towards *Epicureans* and *Sectarians*

The example of an inner-Jewish apologetic which we encountered in the last-mentioned martyr narrative leads us to a further point. Besides those dialogues between rabbis and open-minded gentiles which we have already discussed, rabbinic literature contains very similar debates between rabbis and religious dissidents at the fringes of the community. For the designation of Jews who opposed their authority and teaching, the rabbis had quite a range of different expressions, such as *Sadducee* (צדוקי), *Epicurean* (אפיקורוס), *sectarian* (מין), *apostate* (משומד), *drawn (foreskin)* (משוך), *denier of the principle* (כופר בעיקר, literally, *de-*

[53] bBer 61b.

[54] This result seems very much in line with the observations made by J. Lieu, *Jews, Christians and 'Pagans' in Conflict* (in this volume).

nier of the root) and others.[55] For the present purpose, we may confine ourselves to the *Epicureans* and the *sectarians*.

By the term *Epicurean* rabbinic tradition does not refer to the adherents of a Greco-Roman philosophical school (although the borrowing of the word can certainly be seen as part of the reception history of Epicureanism[56]), but in a more general way to those who deny the divine guidance of the world, the legitimacy of the Torah and the rabbinic authority. A typical example is the biblical insurgent Korah, who, after having detected manifold inconsistencies in the biblical commandments, came to the conclusion that, "The Torah is not from Heaven, and Moses is not a prophet and Aaron is not a High Priest."[57]

Among the sayings collected in *Mishnah Avot*, there occurs, with an attribution to the early tannaitic sage R. Elazar ben Arakh, the exhortation, "Know what you can reply to an Epicurean!" From the context it is apparent that what must be maintained over against the *Epicurean* is the doctrine of divine retribution, and hence, the meaningfulness of human action. In full length, the saying reads as follows:

> Be anxious to study Torah! And know what you can reply to an Epicurean! And know before whom you toil and who is your taskmaster who will pay you the wages for your work![58]

However, an explicit formulation of such a reply (or any other reply) to an *Epicurean* is preserved nowhere in the early rabbinic lit-

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[55] Cf. the respective entries in M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 2 vols., London 1903.

[56] Cf. H.A. Fischel, *Rabbinic Literature and the Greco-Roman Philosophy. A Study of Epicurea and Rhetorica in Early Midrashic Writings*, StPB 21, Leiden 1973.

[57] jSan 10:1/19-21 (Schäfer / Becker, 4, 200). The motif of Korah's protest against particular commandments is attested already in LibAnt 16:1. Cf. H.-J. Becker, *"Epikureer" im Talmud Yerushalmi*, in: P. Schäfer (ed.), *The Talmud Yerushalmi and Graeco-Roman Culture*, vol. 1, TSAJ 71, Tübingen 1998, 397-421.

[58] mAv 2:14. The saying recurs with minor variations in ARN A 17:16 and ARN B 30:20 (Becker, 176f. and 364). Neither recension of ARN, however, adds any commentary.

erature.[59] Instead, the *Babylonian Talmud* qualifies this tannaitic exhortation by a comment of the amoraic sage R. Yohanan:

> They taught this only (with reference to) an Epicurean from among the worshippers of stars. An Israelite Epicurean, however, would become all the more impudent.[60]

As it seems, theological discussions with freethinkers of Jewish provenance were regarded as unpromising. The same may hold for the *kofer ba-'iqqar*, as dialogues with such *deniers of the principle* are likewise absent from early rabbinic writings. Whether *principle* here refers to God, to the authority of the Torah or, perhaps most likely, to the foundations of Judaism in general, its denial was apparently so far-reaching that any attempt of winning back a *kofer ba-'iqqar* seemed in vain.[61]

It was different, though, with the *minim*, those *sectarians* whom modern scholarship mostly identifies as Jewish Christians, occasionally also as Jewish gnostics or gentile Christians,[62] since the overall

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[59] A possible exception is the reply to Cain with which Abel is credited in TPsJ and CN Gen 4:8, as it affirms God's justice and the retribution in the afterlife against Cain's denial of a divine guidance of the world. The term *Epicurean*, however, does not occur in this context. Cf. J.M. Bassler, *Cain and Abel in the Palestinian Targums. A Brief Note on an Old Controversy*, in: JSJ 17 (1986), 56-64 (63).

[60] bSan 38b.

[61] For a qualification, however, it should be noted that כופר בעיקר is preferably not used as a designation of particular persons but as a predicate which points out what a given transgression or misdemeanour ultimately would amount to; cf., e.g., tBM 6:17 (Lieberman, 4, 96): "Thus you have learned that those who lend for interest deny the principle"; tShevu 3:6 (Zuckermandel, 450): "Nobody denies a commandment unless he denies the principle, and nobody comes to a matter of transgression unless he denies Him who gave the commandment."

[62] See the detailed discussion in R. Kimelman, Birkat Ha-Minim *and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity*, in: E.P. Sanders / A.I. Baumgarten / A. Mendelson (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, vol. 2*, Philadelphia 1981, 226-244 (228-232); cf. also R. Kalmin, *Christians and Heretics in Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity*, in: HThR 87 (1994), 155-169; W. Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy*, Edinburgh 1998, 67-110; G. Bohak, *Magical means for handling* minim *in rabbinic literature*, in: P.J. Tomson / D. Lambers-Petry (eds.),

picture rabbinic sources convey of their teachings is far from coherent.[63] Admittedly, the general reputation of these people is no better than that of the *Epicureans*, as may be illustrated by the following saying of the early tannaitic sage R. Tarfon:

> If someone pursued me, I would enter a house of idolatry [i.e. for shelter], but I would not enter the houses of them [i.e. the *minim*]. For the idolaters deny Him without knowing Him. They, however, *know* Him and deny Him.[64]

As in the case of the *Epicureans*, dissidence in Israel is deemed worse than ignorance in the gentile world. Nevertheless, the literary context of this harsh verdict makes us aware of an essential difference between a *sectarian* and an *Epicurean*. The saying is to affirm the halakhic rule that *gospels* and other *scrolls* which belong to the *minim* must not be saved from a fire, even though the name of God be written in them. This means that *minim* were known to possess holy scriptures, and the term *scroll* (ספר) may even include Torah manuscripts. And it is precisely the claim of the *sectarians* to the Bible which provides the common ground for numerous rabbinic arguments with these opponents,[65] including dialogues quite similar to those with Antoninus and the *matrona*. One example may suffice:

> The *minim* asked R. Simlai: '[...] What does it mean that it is written, *Let us make man in our image and according to our likeness* (Gen 1:26)?' He said to them, 'It is not written, *And gods created man in* their *image*, but *And God created man in his image*

The Image of the Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature, WUNT 158, Tübingen 2003, 267-279 (267 no. 1 and 272 no. 24).

[63] Cf. in particular Kalmin, 1994. For the present purpose, however, this problem need not be solved, as it is not the historical identity of the *minim* that concerns us here but the ways in which the rabbinic related to them.

[64] tShab 13(14):5 (Zuckermandel, 129).

[65] Bohak, 2003, 272, quotes MTeh 104:27 (Buber, 224b), where a *min* is mentioned who "pestered" a rabbi in his neighbourhood "with Bible verses". For convergences in topics and even genre between rabbinic and Christian exegesis in late antiquity (which may suggest a high degree of mutual influence), see Horbury, 1998, 200-225.

> (Gen 1:27).' His disciples said to him, 'You pushed these away with a reed, (but) what will you reply to us?' He said to them, 'At first, Adam was created from dust and Eve was created from Adam. But since then, (human beings are created) *in our image and according to our likeness* (i.e. in the image of both God and the first humans).' [...]. (The *minim*) returned and asked him, 'What does it mean that it is written, El, Elohim, *the Lord*, El, Elohim, *the Lord, he knows* (Josh 22:22)?' He said to them, 'It is not written, *They* know, but *He* knows.' His disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, you pushed these away with a reed, (but) what will you reply to us?' He said to them, 'The three of them are one name, just as you say, 'Βασιλεὺς Caesar Augustus'.'[66]

These pieces of exegetical controversy are just two out of a series of seven, and what makes this series particularly interesting is the fact that, aside from demonstrating that the sectarian belief in two (or perhaps three) powers in heaven[67] is unwarranted, it also offers more or less reasonable explanations for those irritating biblical formulations from which the *minim* derive their evidence. It seems as if it were the sectarian challenge which gave the rabbis the decisive clues for developing their own positions. Even though it is well nigh impossible to determine how much of these discussions sprang from actual debates with Christians, or perhaps Gnostics, and how much is due to the exegesis of the rabbis themselves, it is quite obvious that on the literary level the presence of those *sectarians* is a helpful rhetorical device.

Thus, these dialogues with *minim* by and large convey the same impression as those with emperors and other gentile officials. There is a difference, of course, in that the *minim* are assumed to know the Bible and to have exegetical traditions of their own, which makes them in a certain way akin to the rabbis. Furthermore, dialogues with *minim* may, due to historical circumstances, represent a later stage in rabbinic tradition than those with Roman dignitaries; R. Simlai, the rabbi in the dialogue just quoted, flourished in the 3rd century, whereas Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, two centuries earlier, is usually depicted as

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[66] jBer 9:1/9-11 (Schäfer / Becker, 1/1-2,220f.).

[67] Cf. A.F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven. Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, SJLA 25, Leiden, 1977.

engaging in debate with *Sadducees* and *Boethusians* rather than *minim*.[68] More important, however, is the identical literary function of the varying dialogue partners and the essentially peaceful setting in all these debates. Objections which could be attributed to open-minded outsiders were an easy means to give one's own position a distinctive shape, whilst the common ground emerging in friendly and respectful conversations that were stimulated by shared interests made sure that one still belonged to one and the same mental world.

5. Conclusion

Our considerations may be summarized in three points.

1. On a broader literary level, rabbinic writings are clearly non-apologetic. Despite the lack of an apologetic genre, however, parts of the rabbinic tradition display what may be termed an *apologetic awareness*. It expresses itself in the conviction that Jewish beliefs are of interest to non-Jews, and can also be explained to them by means of reasoning.

2. A sincere interest on the part of the outsider was deemed a necessary prerequisite for discussion. Debates were considered fertile to the extent in which the interlocutor had a previous knowledge of Judaism, and of the Bible in particular. No attempts were made to defend Jewish beliefs before opponents who despised them from the outset. Dialogues with Roman oppressors were regarded as pointless, as were arguments with Jewish *Epicureans*.

3. With early Christian apologies, the apologetic dialogues of the rabbis have in common that they make use of the intellectual confrontation with the *other* in order to define the own position and to create a distinctive self-image. However, it seems that the rabbis, in distinction from some of the most prominent Christian apologists, experienced this not as a struggle in face of violence and oppression, but as an intellectual endeavour in an essentially peaceful environment.

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[68] For examples see Neusner, ²1970, 75f.78.81f.83f. It would be interesting to find out whether the ratio between dialogues with *minim* and dialogues with Roman dignitaries significantly increases from tannaitic to amoraic traditions (and I would expect it does).

Truth Begs No Favours[1] - Martyr-Literature and Apologetics

Jakob Engberg

1. Introduction - The Problem

> Governors of The Roman Empire, seated as you are before the eyes of all, in almost the highest position in the state to pronounce judgment: if you are not allowed to conduct an open and public examination and inquiry as to what the real truth is with regard to the Christians; if in this case your authority either fears or blushes to conduct a public investigation with the care demanded by justice; if finally, as happened lately in domestic trials, a reckless hatred of our school has blocked the way for a defence, then let the Truth reach your ears by the stealthy avenue of silent literature.[2]

In the first Chapter of Tertullian's *Apologeticum*, the apologist thus claims that he has written his apology and addressed it to the governors of the Roman Empire as a substitute for a speech for the defence in court. To my knowledge, no one would argue that Tertullian wrote his apology with this *single* purpose in mind and *solely* for such a limited audience of high ranking magistrates. The question of whom the apologists wrote their works for and why they wrote them is much more complicated.[3] But assuming *for a moment* the addressing

[1] Allusion to Tert., apol. 1.2.

[2] Tert., apol. 1.1.

[3] For well-argued views that most apologies proper were in fact written to and sent to the addressees (i.e. Roman emperors and magistrates), see e.g. W. Kinzig, *Der "Sitz im Leben" der Apologie in der Alte Kirche*, in: ZKG 100 (1998), 291-317 (who concludes, that all preserved apologies except the *Apologeticum* of Tertullian but including the

of apologies to Roman magistrates and emperors to be mere literary devices, assuming that they were never sent or even intended to be sent to these addressees, then the authors must have had other contemporary audiences in mind, most likely other Christians. Even in that case, I will argue that the implied charges against Christians and the apologetic counter-arguments offered must have been framed so as to be recognizable and useful to this contemporary audience. It is therefore reasonable to assume that apologies can give us some idea of the relationship between Christians and pagans and of the legal prosecutions of Christians by Roman authorities.

In antiquity (as today), however, it was a known, described and used practice in literature to "invent" opponents and "invent" arguments and charges of opponents and then to refute those.[4] The idea was that the invented opponents and invented charges provided the author with an "excuse" to expound his political, philosophical or religious views, theories or persuasions. Therefore, when reading the early Christian apologists, it is prudent to pause and ponder whether the common refutations of charges of 1) ungodliness, 2) superstition, and 3) debaucheries did in fact respond to real charges or whether such charges were merely invented (or blown out of proportions) by the apologists so that, by refuting them, they could promulgate the views that

1. idols were not gods and ought not to be worshipped
2. the Heavenly Father and Jesus were divine and ought to be worshipped

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Ad Scapulam were most likely sent to the addressees) and F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC - AD 337)*, New York ²1992 (1977), 556-560. Simon Price is bypassing the question of (intended and) *actual readership* as *unknowable, but perhaps not crucial* (to his agenda). See S. Price, *Latin Christian Apologetics. Minucius Felix, Tertullian, and Cyprian*, in: M. Edwards / M. Goodman / S. Price / C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, Oxford 1999, 105-129 (105).

[4] E.g. A.K. Petersen, *Kritik og apologetik - et Århusprojekt*, in: Præsteforeningens Blad 8 (2006), 138-145 (142) and J. Engberg, *Fordømmelse, kritik og forundring. Samtidige hedenske forfatteres bedømmelse af kristne og kristendom*, in: J. Engberg / A.-C. Jacobsen / J. Ulrich (eds.), *Til forsvar for kristendommen. Tidlige kristne apologeter*, Copenhagen 2006, 291-328 (292).

3. Christian morality was superior to the morality of all other people including philosophers.

Some modern scholars have raised such questions and some have answered that the charges were invented (or blown out of proportions) for such purposes.[5] Concerning Justin's refutation of the (alleged) charge of ungodliness Frances Young, for instance, writes: "The charge of atheism which is the main issue that Justin addresses recalls the charge against Socrates, whom Justin is anxious to claim as a proto-Christian; this is hardly a serious issue."[6]

For comparison on this question we have another "collection" of contemporary Christian texts, the martyr-narratives, narrating how some such confrontations and prosecutions led to the execution of Christians. In some of the accounts, *acta* or *gesta martyrum*, central passages follow the style of a Roman court record, *commentaries* or *tabella*.[7] The traditional position in scholarship has been that these record-like accounts were adaptations of true public and official records. It is still a subject of debate whether some of the Christian authors of these martyr accounts actually had access to authentic records. It is clear from Egyptian papyri that it was possible to purchase Roman court records for private use.[8] Tertullian refers to such a record, or *tabella*, in a passage of his *Apologeticum* (2.20), but this has yet to receive widespread attention in scholarship. Finally, and to my knowledge equally ignored by scholarship on martyr-narratives, the traditional view has

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[5] E.g. G. Clark, *Christianity and Roman Society*, Cambridge 2004, 17f. and F. Young, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century*, in: Edwards et al. (eds.), 1999, 81-104 (82-84).

[6] Young, 1998, 83.

[7] This and the following, e.g. T.D. Barnes, *Pre-Decian Acta Martyrum*, in: JThS 19 (1968), 509-531 (527-529); G.W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, Cambridge 1995, 27-39; H. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs. Introduction texts and translations*, Oxford 1972, LI-LIII; J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 1, Utrecht 1962 (1953), 176-178; G.A. Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts of Martyrs and Commentarii*, Philadelphia 1988, 19-36; B. Altaner / A. Stuiber, *Patrologie. Leben, Schriften und Lehre der Kirchenväter*, Freiburg [7]1966, 90-94 and J.W. van Henten / F. Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death*, London 2002, 3.

[8] Bisbee, 1988, 19-31. E.g. also R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean world from the second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine*, London 1986, 472 for a convincing argument showing that Christians had access to such protocols.

been vindicated by the discovery made by the Austrian scholar Johannes Divjak of more than a dozen hitherto unknown Augustinian letters first published in 1981.[9] In one of these letters Augustine responds to a letter from the deacon Paulinius. From this response we can deduce that Paulinius had sent a number of martyr-texts to Augustine, some of them public records, and that Paulinius had requested of Augustine that he would avail himself of these to make (presumably more elegant) narratives in his own pen. Augustine declines to do so, allegedly out of admiration for the powerful simplicity of the public records and, as he states, because he does not know anything about the fate of the martyrs, which is not written herein or in the accounts of his predecessors. All of this makes it plausible that (other) Christian authors could have used such public records when they composed their accounts of martyrdom.[10] But even assuming access to such records, authors or redactors of the most record-like accounts could still be expected to have done a creative work of framing and organizing the dialogue between martyrs and magistrate - a view also supported by Paulinius' suggestion in the Augustinian letter.

Other authors of martyr accounts, *passiones* or *martyria*, indicated that they, and indeed some of their readers, were eyewitnesses to the events they described.

That some of the authors did indeed have first-hand knowledge of some of the events they described is evident, and that some even wrote for an audience comprised partly of readers with some first-hand knowledge is not to be doubted.[11] But at least, as we shall see, one such author has not blushed from relating details from conversations in private between magistrates and martyrs that he could not have been privy to.

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[9] J. Divjak (ed.), *Epistolae ex duobus codicibus nuper in lucum prolatae. Sancti Aureli Augustini Opera*, in: CSEL 88 (1981), ep. 29*.

[10] Bisbee, 1988, 94-118 himself argues that the martyr accounts as they appear today are not direct reproductions of court protocols.

[11] E.g. Mart.Perp. 1, a conclusive passage since the author of the frame-story feels herself or himself obliged to argue that the events she or he describes and which some of her or his readers have themselves witnessed are not to be despised although they are recent.

But even assuming that none of the record-like texts used records as sources and even assuming that all the authors with first-hand knowledge of the martyrdom they described took many such liberties, these authors still wrote for a contemporary (Christian) audience, who would expect descriptions of confrontations that in a dramatized and idealized form reflected the realities of pagan-Christian relations as they knew them.

Many scholars have thus been analyzing passages from both apologetics and martyr-narratives in the same books, chapters of books or articles, and this has usually been done exactly in order to better understand the nature and development of persecution of Christians. There is nothing wrong in this, indeed I have myself been doing it, and I have just been arguing that it is prudent to do so.

But such a comparison with a single question and purpose in mind is no substitute for a more systematic comparison of the contemporary apologies and martyr-narratives with a view to understanding the relationship between these two kinds of early Christian writings and their contexts.[12]

This article will study aspects of this relationship by addressing the following questions:

1. Are the accusations levelled against the martyrs similar to or different from the accusations that the apologists are defending Christians against?
2. Are the arguments and comments provided by martyrs and authors of martyr-narratives to rebut such accusations related to the defence of Christianity found in apologetics? In other words, are there apologetic elements in martyr-narratives?
3. How did apologists write about Christian martyrs, martyr-ideology and martyrdoms in their apologetic works? In other words, how and why are martyrdoms and narratives of martyrdoms used as apologetic arguments?

[12] M. Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum. Die Kontroverse um den christlichen Wahrheitsanspruch in den ersten Jahrhunderten*, Paderborn ²2001, 31-33, gives what can count as a brief catalogue of the issues to be discussed in this article.

Such a study could have ramifications for understanding each type of texts better but also for a revaluation of their usefulness and value as sources for understanding the opposition against Christians. After a presentation of the material, I will thus:

1. Compare the charges and apologetic counter-arguments in martyr-narratives and apologetics.
2. Analyze other "apologetic" motives in martyr-narratives and references to martyrs in apologies - "Proof from courage of martyrs".

2. The Material

2.1. Apologetics

From the second and early third centuries we know of the following so called apologetics[13] addressed to Roman authorities:

Author	Title	Addressee (years of rule)
Quadratus[14]	Apology	Hadrian (117-138)
Aristides[15]	Apology	Hadrian (117-138) or Antoninus Pius (138-161)
Justin	1 and 2 Apology[16]	Antoninus Pius (138-161)
Apollinaris[17]	Apology	Marcus Aurelius (161-180)
Melito[18]	Apology	Marcus Aurelius (161-180)

[13] To label some ancient Christian writings *apologies* and some ancient Christian authors *apologists* is in some sense a modern notion dating from the 17th century AD. I will nevertheless argue that the term is useful for a comparison of such writings and authors.

[14] Eus., h.e. 4.3.Only short quote preserved.

[15] Preserved in translation.

[16] Might originally have been one apology.

[17] Eus., h.e. 4.26. Nothing preserved.

[18] Eus., h.e. 4.26. Only short quote preserved.

Author	Title	Addressee (years of rule)
Athenagoras	Embassy[19]	Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (joint rule 176-180)[20]
Tertullian	Apology	Provincial governors (probably written late 190s)
Tertullian	To Scapula	Scapula, governor of Africa (211-213)

These are by no means the only apologetic writings known to us as indeed many of the other contributions to this volume deal with other apologetic writings. But these nine apologetics will, for the purpose of this study, be separated from the remaining corpus of apologetic writings - the separating criterion being only the formal address to Roman emperors or magistrates.[21]

2.2. Martyr-literature

The Christian martyr-literature of antiquity and the Middle Ages describing Roman persecution of Christians is voluminous. There is a consensus, however, that the vast majority of these texts are not contemporary with the events they describe, let alone the second and early third centuries.[22] The fundamental work of separating the contemporary accounts, or at least accounts that contained a contemporary core, from the later accounts was carried out by Adolf von Harnack. Von Harnack's work has been followed by scholars ever since,[23] and will also be the point of reference for this presentation.

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[19] *Legatio* or *presbia*.

[20] With Commodus as co-ruler, pointing to the period between November 176 (where Commodus was given a long range of important imperial titles, it should be noted, however, that the title Caesar was accorded to him in 169) and March 180 (the death of Marcus Aurelius).

[21] Price, 1998, 105-106 uses the same criteria. Intimately connected writings, such as Tertullians *Apologeticum* and *Ad Nationes* are hereby separated.

[22] E.g. Musurillo, 1972, XI-XII.

[23] Musurillo, 1972, XI, Quasten, 1962, vol. 1, 76-185 and Barnes, 1968, 509. Barnes makes no reference to von Harnack.

Title of martyr-narrative	Date of martyrdom	Date of text
Polycarp	155-159[24]	Contemporary
Carpus, Papylus and Agathonicê	161-169[25]	3rd century (contemporary)[26]
Ptolemaeus and Lucius	144-154[27]	Contemporary (152-255)
Justin and Companions	165	3rd-4th centuries (contemporary)[28]
Martyrs of Lyon	177[29]	Contemporary
Scillitan Martyrs	180	Contemporary
Apollonius	180-185	5th - 6th centuries[30]
Perpetua and Felicitas	198-210	Contemporary
Potamiaena and Basilides	205-210	303-325[31]

If we were to compare apologetics and martyr-narratives in respects to such issues as genre, audience, level of sophistication etc., we would be likely to find much dissimilarity. Some of these may better be described as dissimilarities in degree than in kind. For example, 1) neither apologetics nor martyr-narratives constituted fixed genres; 2) although addressed to, and most likely read by, outsiders,

[24] According to Barnes, 1968, 509. Eus., h.e. 4.15 dates it somewhat later.

[25] Others date it to AD 250-251, arguing from the ambiguous reference in A 11 (Greek) and the clear reference in B 2 (Latin) to imperial orders to sacrifice.

[26] Greek text might be from early 3rd century, Latin must in known form be later than 250.

[27] Just., 2 apol. 2.

[28] Known in three different recensions, a synoptic analysis of the two shorter and earliest can give us an idea of the original.

[29] Eus., h.e. 5.1.

[30] Known in two different versions in Greek and Armenian. An earlier account was known by and referred to by Eus., h.e. 5.21. The narratives are therefore of very limited relevance for our study.

[31] From Eus., h.e. 6.5. It might reflect an earlier oral tradition.

apologetics, like martyr-narratives, were (also) read by Christians; and 3) although it might be possible to classify apologetics among the more sophisticated writings of the second century and (some of the) martyr-narratives among the more primitive, such a distinction between high and low culture, and high and low literature, which has formed the basis of much scholarship, has in the past 20 years been questioned by scholars like Peter Brown, Averil Cameron and Daniel Boyarin, and basing their arguments exactly on early Christian texts.[32]

3. The Charges against Christians in Martyr-narratives and Apologetics

Leaving aside such issues, we will in this part limit ourselves to comparing the accusations against Christians in apologetics and in martyr-narratives, and we will compare the defence offered by the apologists and Christian authors (and martyrs) of martyr-narratives to counter these allegations. Focus will be on three charges:

1. The accusation that Christians do not worship the gods and are thus to be labelled ungodly.
2. The accusation that Christians are somehow engaged in a despicable or even menacing cultic worship of Jesus, that they practice magic, promulgate a strange cult, are out of their mind and thus to be labelled superstitious.
3. The accusation that Christians are amoral, involved in debaucheries, such as incest and cannibalism.

If similarities are found in these instances, this will be all the more remarkable, taking into account the differences pertaining to genre, audience and level of sophistication between martyr-narratives and apologetics.

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[32] E.g. P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints. Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, HLHR.NS 2, Chicago 1981, 19; A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire. The Development of Christian Discourse*, Berkeley 1991, 36-39, 107-114 and 185-188 and D. Boyarin, *Dying for God. Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*, Stanford 1999, 43.

3.1. Ungodliness

3.1.1. Ungodliness in Apologies: the Charge[33]

Athenagoras, leg. 4.1: "It is so clear that we are not ungodly that it appears ludicrous even to undertake the refutation of those who make the claim."

Well, things were hardly as clear as that, and Athenagoras himself must have been conscious of this since he took it upon himself to use 75 percent of his *Legatio* or 27 chapters to defend Christians against the charge that they did not worship the gods.[34] His fellow apologists apparently agreed with him that this was indeed a major charge. Justin also devoted substantial parts of his apologies to this charge and so did Tertullian, for instance writing:[35]

> You do not worship the gods, you say, 'and you do not offer sacrifice for the emperors.' It follows that we do not sacrifice for others for the same reason that we do not do it for ourselves - it follows immediately from our not worshipping the gods. Consequently, we are considered guilty of sacrilege and treason. This is the chief accusation against us - in fact, it is the whole case.

Tertullian claims that the chief charge against Christians was their failure to "worship" (*colitis)* the gods. That is substantiated when we turn to Athenagoras who claims that (Leg 13.1):

> The majority of those accusing us of ungodliness [...] have not even the least notion of the nature of God, they are ignorant of scientific or theological doctrine and [...] measure piety in terms of sacrifice.

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[33] E.g. also Fiedrowicz, [2]2001, 190-196.

[34] Athen., leg. 4-30, cf. also the preface to Athenagoras, *"Legatio" and "De Resurrectione"*, ed. and transl. by W.R. Schoedel, Oxford 1972, xiv and xxiii-xxv.

[35] Just., 1. apol. 4-6, 9-10 and 13-14; Just., 2 apol. 3 and 10. Tert., apol. 10-35 and Tert., Scap. 2, for the quotation: Tert., apol. 10.1.

3.1.2. Ungodliness in Apologies: the Apology

Now it is a small wonder that the apologists had such a difficult time defending Christians against accusations for not worshipping the gods that they were compelled to devote substantial parts of their apologies to this issue. The Christians refused to worship the gods, so simply to deny the charge was out of the question.

The rhetorician Hermagoras from Temnos (2nd century BC) had developed a system for grouping cases into three different categories according to the constellation (στάσις or *status / constitutio*) of the controversy between the parties in the case. We know from several ancient tracts on rhetoric that this system was commonly adhered to.[36] According to a Latin translation of Hermagoras' system, a *controversia* could (and should) be classified as belonging to one of the following groups: 1) *Controversia facti* (or *status coniecturalis - conjectural issue*): a controversy about what has happened or about whether anything has happened at all. 2) *Controversia nominis* (or status definitivus - the issue of definition): a controversy over how to name, label and view an event. 3) *Controversia generis* (or status qualitatis - the issue of quality): a controversy over the character of the event.

The apologies could not base their defence against the charge of not worshipping the gods on a simple *controversia facti*. They could, of course, not deny that they did not sacrifice to gods since it was essential for them not to perform such sacrifices. Instead, the apologists turned to *controversia generis* and *controversia nominis*: arguing that the so-called gods, whom they refused to worship, were no gods at all and that, consequently, the Christians were not to be labelled ungodly when they refused to worship them.[37]

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[36] E.g. Cic., Brut. 263 and 271; Cic., inv. 2.116-120; the anonymous work once attributed to Cic., Rhetorica ad Herennium 18-25 and Quint., inst. 3.6. According to Quintilian some authors claimed that Hermagoras had copied part of the system from earlier works (3.6,3) while other theories challenged or expanded the stasis-theory of Hermagoras (3.6,44-51). The origin of the theory, however, is irrelevant for our discussion. The challengers and expanders of the Hermagoras' stasis-theory are actually providing evidence for the permeating influence of the theory, something which also Quintilian concludes with reference to the authority of Cicero (3.6,80).

[37] E.g. Athen., leg. 15,1-27,2; Tert., apol. 10-20 and Scap. 2.

Justin, for instance, wrote (1 apol. 6.1): "We are called ungodly. And we confess that we are ungodly in regard to so-called gods such as these; but not in regard to the most true God, the father of righteousness [...]."

Athenagoras also, in stating that the chief accusation was the failure of Christians to offer sacrifices to the gods (leg. 13.1), turned to an arsenal of arguments from philosophy arguing that the Creator and Father was in no need of sacrifice at all (leg. 13.1-4). A line of argument known already in Aristides (apol. 1.3, 5-9 and 12-13) and Justin (1 apol. 9-10, depending also on Isa. 44) and found again in Tertullian (apol. 10-12, 22-24 and 28-29).

3.1.3. Ungodliness in Martyr-narratives: the Charge

The charge that Christians are ungodly and that they do not worship the gods, and the demand of different magistrates that the accused Christians should offer sacrifice to the gods, reappear frequently in martyr-narratives.[38]

In the letter narrating about the martyrs in Lyon, we hear that a Christian named Epagathus requested from the governor that he be allowed to: "speak in defence of the Christians to the effect that they were innocent of ungodliness or impiety."[39] The request was not granted and instead Epagathus was executed. In the same account, the apostate Biblis was tortured at the governor's demand in order to make her confess to ungodliness (Eus., h.e. 5.1,25-26).

Some twenty years earlier, the bishop Polycarp was brought to the Stadium in Smyrna to appear before the proconsul of the province of Asia. Here the proconsul demanded of Polycarp that he recant being a Christian and that he defame his fellow Christians with the words: "Away with the ungodly!"[40]

The crowd of pagans in the stadium was in agreement with the governor. In connection with an earlier incident, where a number of anonymous martyrs had been executed (Mart.Polyc. 3.2), the author of the martyr-narrative, Marcianus, had written: "the whole mob was

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[38] E.g. Mart.Carp. A4, A9, A11, A21, A33, B2, B3, B6; Mart.Just. A5, B1, B2, B4; Mart. Perp. 6.2-4 and 15,5. See also the examples below.

[39] Eus., h.e. 5.1,9.

[40] Mart.Polyc. 9,2. Compare this to the shouts of the crowd in Lucian's *Alexander* (38).

astonished at the courage of the God-loving and God-fearing race of Christians, and they shouted out: Away with these ungodly!" The crowd further accuses Polycarp of teaching others irreverence for the gods. According to the account, the mob shouted the following words concerning Polycarp (Mart.Polyc. 12.2): "Here is the schoolmaster of Asia - the father of the Christians - the destroyer of our gods - the one that teaches the multitude not to sacrifice or do reverence!"

As in the apologetic writings, it is the Christians' lack of participation in rite and cult rather than their "inner convictions" that is of concern to the crowd. It was their failure to sacrifice to and worship the gods that jeopardized peace with the gods; the disposition of the worshipper was a matter of only secondary importance.

3.1.4. Ungodliness in Martyr-narratives: the Apology

It is hardly conceivable that the mob would admire the courage of the *'God-loving'* and *'God-fearing'* Christians while, at the same time, demanding them to be executed for ungodliness. These decorative adjectives must surely be regarded as Marcianus' own annotation. Since Marcianus found it necessary to include such an annotation, it seems that the accusation of the Christians for ungodliness was such an essential issue that he could not allow it to go unanswered, i.e. without a rebuttal. We thus have here an example of how an apologetic counter to a crucial charge against Christians in the simplest of ways is included in the narrative by the author.

But this apology was obviously only for the benefit of the reader of the narrative, since it was so clear that the decorative adjectives were added by Marcianus. In the letter narrating about the persecution in Lyon, Epagathus, as we have seen, had also been denied the chance of delivering an oral apology.

But back in Smyrna, the author of the letter puts another apologetic rebuttal of the charge of ungodliness in the mouth of his main character, Polycarp, a rebuttal that is thus made into a part of the narrative that the other characters are compelled to react on. We will return to this rebuttal below because the *way* the rebuttal is framed is well-known from and more fully developed in contemporary apologies.

Sometimes we also find an apologetic defence against the charge of ungodliness that, in an admittedly much less developed form,

corresponds to the defence in apologies, i.e. a defence based on *controversia generis* rather than on a *controversia facti*.[41]

The Urban Prefect in Rome in 165 asked the accused Liberian: "Are you a Christian, and do you also refuse to be pious." Liberian answered: "Yes, I too am a Christian. I believe in the one true God, and worship him."[42] The most fully developed example of apologetic rebuttal of the charge of ungodliness put into the mouth of a martyr is found in the narrative about the martyrdom of Carpus, Pamfilus and Agathonice. The dating and the manuscript traditions of this narrative raise a host of problems. A discussion of these questions is beyond the scope of this study, but I will follow Eusebius (and Harnack) and date these martyrdoms to the reign of Marcus Aurelius and, for the moment, leave open the question whether to prefer the Greek recension (B) or the shorter Latin recension (A) as the more original.[43] There are more apologetic topoi in the Greek than in the Latin version, but for now we will focus on the topoi appearing in both renditions. In both versions, the 'apologetic' answers of the martyrs Carpus (the more outspoken) and Pamfilus (who defends himself more briefly) are triggered by the proconsul demanding veneration of and sacrifices to the gods.[44]

In both versions, Carpus defends himself by implying that the gods are not proper gods to worship since they are both perishable, and by claiming that they are not the gods who have created heaven and earth (A9 and B2). In apologies, we find two arguments side by side which would seem to contradict one another: 1) The gods are only deceitful demons; 2) The gods are dead, nothing at all, empty idols fashioned by hands or men of previous ages, who died a long time ago.[45] These ar-

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[41] E.g. examples below and Eus., h.e. 5.1,29f. and 52.

[42] Quoted from Mart.Just. B4,9 in Musurillo's translation, Musurillo, 1972, 51; similar but not identical dialogue is found in A4,9, it is thus likely that this part of the dialogue is based on the contemporary account.

[43] Eus., h.e. 4.15,48; A. von Harnack, *Die Akten des Karpus, des Papylus und der Agathonike*, in: TU 3 (1888), 440-454 (440-444) and Musurillo, 1972, xv-xvi.

[44] Mart.Carp. A4, A9-10, A21, A33, B2-3 and B6.

[45] E.g. Athen., leg. 15.1-17.5 (idols made by men); 18.1-2 and 23-27 (demonic powers); 18.3-19.4 (perishable); 28,1-30,6 (humans, who lived and died in ancient times). Tert., apol. 10.2 (gods do not exist); 10.3-11.1 (humans, who lived and died in ancient times); 12 (idols made by men); 22-24 (demons).

guments are both presented in a condensed form in the few sentences spoken by the martyrs during the interrogation.[46]

Carpus in the Greek version saying for example (A5): "I will not sacrifice to such idols as these. Do what you like! It is impossible for me to sacrifice to these demons with their deceptive appearances. For those who sacrifice to them are like them."[47]

Pamfilus in the Latin version saying for example (B4): "I have never offered sacrifice to empty idols; rather I immolate myself to the living and true God."[48]

The proconsul was not (of course) convinced by such arguments of the innocence of the Christians. On the contrary, they confirmed to him that the Christians were indeed ungodly. After one of the apologetic replies of Carpus, where Carpus had explained that the gods only appear to be able to foretell the future because of the Devil's machinations, the proconsul declared (A21): "By allowing you to babble on so much, I have led you to blaspheme the gods and the august emperors. We must let this go no further."

In Carthage in the year 180, the proconsul of Africa, Saturninus, expected a similar blasphemous defence. When the confessor Speratus asked him calmly to listen to an explanation of why he would not swear by the genius of the emperor and pray, Saturninus replied: "If you begin to malign our sacred rites (mala de sacris nostris) I shall not listen to you."

Irreverent defaming of the gods was obviously to be expected of Christians, who were explaining why they would not sacrifice to the gods, and this "expectation" was met both in martyr-narratives and in apologetics.

3.2. Superstition

In a seminal article from 1963 entitled "Why were the Early Christians Persecuted?", G.E.M. de Ste. Croix concluded: "what I have called the positive side of Christianity is never officially attacked: persecution did not extend to any aspect of the Christian religion other than its re-

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[46] Demons and the Devil: Mart.Carp. A5-10, A17-20 and B6; dead men, made from earthly substance: Mart.Carp. A11-16 and B2-4.

[47] Translation according to Musurillo, 1972, 23.

[48] Translation according to Musurillo, 1972, 31.

fusal to acknowledge other gods."[49] To Ste. Croix, it was the perceived Christian ungodliness discussed above which constituted the most important impetus to persecution. This main thesis, however, was challenged in 1964 by A.N. Sherwin-White arguing that the Christians, until the middle of the 2nd century, were rather persecuted because they were perceived to be immoral.[50] Only gradually, according to Sherwin-White, did the Roman authorities become convinced that the Christians were not in fact incestuous cannibals, and only gradually did the authorities learn about the ungodly nature of the Christian phenomenon and, therefore, only gradually did this prompt the authorities to persecute Christians for jeopardizing the *pax deorum*, instead of persecuting them for debaucheries. In the transitional phase, according to Sherwin-White, the Roman authorities punished the Christians for being obstinate to magistrates. Ste. Croix answered the same year and, in order to refute Sherwin-White's claims, he pointed to the fact that Tacitus, Suetonius and Pliny all labelled the Christians superstitious. Writing about Pliny, Ste. Croix concludes: "As with Suetonius and Tacitus, it is the religion itself, the superstitio, which is abhorrent: it is *'prava, immodica'* (§8 of his letter)."[51] Ste. Croix' argumentation against Sherwin-White is convincing, but he fails to specify how the perception that Christians were superstitious relates to the perception that they were ungodly. Likewise, he fails to notice that the allegation that Christians are superstitious seems to entail that the Christians were blamed not only for what they did not do (i.e. their failure to worship the gods) but also for what they did (i.e. worship there own god or Christ in an excessive way). Pliny had reported that the superstitious worship of Christ *quasi deo*, "as to a god", was the *culpae* (guilt) and *erroris* (error) of those accused before him.[52]

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[49] G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *Why were the early Christians persecuted?*, in: PaP 26 (1963), 6-38 (28).

[50] This and the following: A.N. Sherwin-White, *Why were the early Christians persecuted? An Amendment*, in: PaP 27 (1964), 23-27.

[51] G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *Why were the early Christians persecuted? A Rejoinder*, in: PaP 27 (1964), 28-33 (30).

[52] J. Engberg, *Impulsore Chresto. Opposition to Christianity in the Roman Empire c. 50-250 AD*, ECCA 2, Frankfurt 2007, 173-205. Contrary to e.g. K. Thraede, *Noch einmal:*

To modern people, it might seem strange that people accused of being ungodly (atheists) could also be accused of being superstitious. In today's world, superstition would seem to be the enemy of the rational, science etc.; in antiquity, however, it was customary to perceive *superstitio* as the enemy of *religio*. Superstition and ungodliness might by some, like Plutarch, be described as contradictions but, in this case, Plutarch described them as related opponents of proper religion.[53] Superstition could be defined as exaggerated worship of a new, foreign and unworthy deity, excessive worship of a deity to the exclusion of others, and as related to magic and a lack of moral.[54] Small wonder then that Christians simultaneously could find themselves accused of not worshipping gods and of worshipping Jesus; a man who had lived and died recently and, to an outsider, without glory and with much shame; a man who would thus easily fit all the categories of a new, strange and improper "deity".[55]

3.2.1. Superstition in Apologies: the Charge

And sure enough, we do find apologists dealing with accusations that the Christian worship of Christ is superstitious, that Christians

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Plinius d. J. und die Christen, in: ZNW 95 (2004), 102-128 (125), who writes: "*quasi Deo* war schwerlich provokant".

[53] Plut., Sup. 1.

[54] E.g. P.J. Koets, *Deisidaimoni. A Contribution to the Knowledge of the Religious Terminology in Greek*, Purmerend 1929; M. Beard / J. North / S.R.F. Price (eds.), *Religions of Rome. Vol. 1. A History*, Cambridge 1998, 92-96 and 213-227; J. Scheid, *Religion et superstition à l'époque de Tacite. Quelques réflexions*, Cádiz 1985, 24f.; J.B. Kätzler, *Religio. Versuch einer Worterklärung*, in: *20. Jahresbericht des Bischöflichen Gymnasiums Paulinum in Schwaz* (1953), 1-18 (7-11); D. Grodzynski, *Superstitio*, in: REA 76 (1974), 36-60 (36-40 and 53); A.K. Michels, *The versatility of Religio*, in: *The Mediterranean World. Papers Presented in Honour of Gilbert Bagani*, Peterborough 1976, 36-77 (66-72); M. Sachot, "*Religio/superstitio*". *Historique d'une subversion et d'un retournement*, in: RHR 208 (1991), 355-394 (364-367) and M. Smith, *De superstitione*, in: *Plutarch's theological Writings and early Christian Literature*, Leiden 1975, 1-35. E.g. also Tac., hist. 4.54,4; ann. 12.59 and 14.30, Cic., flacc. 28,67; nat.deor. 2.28 and 2.71.

[55] E.g. Or., Cels. 2.31, 3.17, 3.34, 6.10, 7.35f. and 8.12.

are practising magic, that they are out of their minds and that they promulgate a foreign cult.[56]

In a context where Justin is dealing with the question of how and why the Christians worship Christ, Justin writes (1 apol. 13.4): "Here they [scil. the pagans] accuse us of madness saying that we give to a crucified man second place after the unchangeable and eternal God, begetter of all things."

None of the apologists of the 2nd or early 3rd century discussed in this volume, compared to other Church fathers and anti-heretic authors, has unfolded a fully developed and advanced Trinitarian theology or Christology - a fact that may partly explain why apologies failed to attract the same interest of later theologians as other early Christian writings.[57] In the works of the four apologists dealt with in this article, Aristides, Justin, Athenagoras and Tertullian, however, we see a clear development towards a more comprehensive explanation of the relationship between God and Christ, and the nature of Christ. Aristides' apology is preoccupied with arguing for monotheism and not offering any explanation of Christian worship of Christ.[58] The charge of superstition might be lurking in the background when Aristides writes (apol. 15,7): "They [scil. the Christians] do not worship strange gods."[59] But that is all. In the works of the other three authors, on the other hand, we do find some passages explaining how and why Christ is to be worshipped.[60]

As in the case of the passage from Justin just quoted, we find indications in these passages that some of the explanations of the

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[56] E.g. Aristides, apol. 15; Just., 1 apol. 30; Tert., apol. 24.9 and 27.2 and the examples discussed below.

[57] E.g. J. Engberg and A.-C. Jacobsen, *Forord*, in: J. Engberg / A.-C. Jacobsen / J. Ulrich, *Til forsvar for kristendommen. Tidlige kristne apologeter*, Copenhagen 2006, 7-14 (7f. and 12f.).

[58] This and the following, e.g. also N.A. Pedersen, *Aristides*, in: J. Engberg / A.-C. Jacobsen / J. Ulrich (eds.), *Til forsvar for kristendommen. Tidlige kristne apologeter*, Copenhagen 2006, 75-84 (71-74 and 83-84) and H.P. Thyssen, *Justin Apologier. Oversat med indledning og kommentar*, Aarhus 1996, 31.

[59] According to the translation from Armenian by J.R. Harris, *The Apology of Aristides on behalf of the Christians*, Cambridge 1891.

[60] E.g. Just., 1 apol. 20-23 and 2 apol. 6; Athen., leg. 10; Tert., apol. 21-23.

nature of Christ and his relationship with the Father was prompted by accusations from outsiders labelling the Christian worship of Christ as a superstition.[61] Apparently this worship of Christ to outsiders seemed to be a most repulsive kind of superstition since, as Justin complains, Christians are put to death as evildoers because of it, while others elsewhere are allowed to worship trees, rivers, mice, cats and crocodiles, and many other kinds of irrational animals.[62]

3.2.2. Superstition in Apologies: the Apology

Like the charge of ungodliness, there was not much hope for the apologists of simply denying such charges with a *controversia facti*, they could not deny the fact that they worshipped Christ or that they wished to continue to do so.

When Tertullian defends the worship of Christ, he again opens with an admittance: Christ had lived recently, during the reign of Tiberius, and he had been an ordinary man (apol. 21.1-3). But, according to Tertullian, the Christians are not ashamed of this, which he incidentally "proves" by referring to the "fact" that (apol. 21.3) "it pleases us to be designated by his name and under it to be condemned". The courage of the martyrs is thus the first small argument offered by Tertullian to show that although Christ was a man, he was not only a man, but also God and worthy of worship (apol. 21.3). In the coming chapters, we find a lot of typical apologetic arguments for the divinity of Christ: his coming and deeds were foretold by prophets in Jewish writings (21.15-18); he performed genuine miracles, which contrary to allegations were not to be mistaken for the tricks of a magician (21.17); prodigies accompanied his death (21.19); he arose from death (21.21); and his divinity was proved and is still proved when demons are exorcised in his name (23f.). These demons are in fact the pagan gods, and their inferiority to Christ is made manifest when they are driven out, not by sorcery, as claimed by opponents (23.7), but by Christ.

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[61] E.g. Just., 1 apol. 22.3.

[62] Just., 1 apol. 24.

3.2.3. The Charge of Superstition in Martyr-narratives

Charges of superstitious worship of Christ, charges of introducing new cults, and fear of Christian magic and the notion that Christians are out of their minds are also found in martyr-narratives.

According to the author of the letter narrating about the martyrs in Lyon, the crowd in this city had accused the Christians because "they introduce this strange new cult among us".[63] A few years later the proconsul of Africa, Saturninus, was equally puzzled and repulsed but more patient, when, in Carthage, he interrogated 6-12 defendants accused of being Christians. He clearly perceived the "rites of the Christians" *(ritu Christiano)* as irreconcilable with "Roman customs" *(Romanorum morem)* (Mart.Scill. 14) in general and Roman religion in particular (Mart.Scill 5); but wishing the defendants to repent rather than be executed, he encouraged them to come to their senses, *si ad bonam mentem redeatis* (Mart.Scill. 1). The implication that the defendants were not of sound mind is repeated later during the interrogation when the proconsul referred to the accused with the term *dementia*, insanity or madness (Mart.Scill. 8). Saturninus failed to persuade the accused and duly had them executed (Mart.Scill. 14-16), thereby removing the challenge of their Christian rites and their madness to Roman customs and religion.

It remains an open question how accurate the account is in its description of Saturninus' perception of Christians. But this is not a significant matter in the context of our present study. Even if Saturninus' perception of the Christians, as portrayed in the account, is only remotely related to how he actually perceived Christians, and to his actual judgment of the twelve martyrs, the author's description of Saturninus' animosity and judgment is evidence of what contemporary Christians would have seen as a plausible animosity and a plausible verdict. It is thus clear that ordinary Christians knew that some pagans regarded them as being mad and their rites as opposing proper "Roman" customs and religion. Even though the term *superstitio* does not appear in Saturninus' verdict, it would not be inappropriate to assume that those who perceived Christianity in such a way would also perceive it to be a superstition.

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[63] Eus., h.e., 5.1,63.

In the same city, some twenty years later, a procurator with temporary powers as proconsul conducted a trial against a number of young Christians. According to the author of the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas, the suspicion that Christians were proficient in magic (16.2) and the fact that the martyr threatened spectators with divine judgment (17f.) caused ordinary Carthaginians to fear the martyrs and Roman officers, and magistrates to treat them more severely. In the eyes of the author of the frame-story, the former fear was unfounded, being based on the allegations of "utterly foolish persons", whereas the latter was, of course, justified. The labelling of the informers as "utterly foolish" provides some sort of a rebuttal against the charge that Christians should be magicians.

We have thus again seen a correspondence between the allegations that apologists are trying to disprove in their apologies and the charges that confronts martyrs in martyr-narratives. This time, however, we have nearly no evidence of a rebuttal of such charges in martyr-narratives.

3.3. Debauchery - Cannibalism and Incest

3.3.1. Debauchery in Apologies: the Charge

In Pliny's famous letter 10.96 to the emperor Trajan, Pliny writes to his master that he had been informed by a former Christian accused before him that during their gatherings, Christians would commonly

> bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food - but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations.[64]

Two female Christian slaves later confirmed this when interrogated under torture by Pliny.

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[64] For this quotation, Pliny, ep., 10.96,7. For the following, also 10.96,8.

The remarkable repudiation, *non in scelus*, in which Pliny emphasizes that Christians took an oath not to commit some crime, indicates that this was not exactly what Pliny expected, that he had presumed Christians to be involved in something unlawful.[65] The fact that Pliny had chosen to include this information from apostates in his letter to Trajan indicates that he likewise expected that this would be a surprise for Trajan. It is also remarkable that Pliny reports to Trajan that the food the Christians shared, according to the testimony of the apostates, was common, *promiscuum*, and harmless, *innoxium*. This statement indicates that previous to the investigation (and letter), both he and Trajan suspected that Christians gathered for deviate and sinister meals.[66] To understand why Pliny found it necessary to write these things, we must turn to later texts. In a speech from the middle of the 2nd century against the Christians, Marcus Cornelius Fronto, the imperial grammarian, rhetorician and leading magistrate, accused Christians of practising sinister rituals when they gathered, specifically eating the flesh of babies and practising incest.[67]

Turning to the contemporary and later Christian apologists Aristides, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras and Tertullian, we find that they all referred to charges against Christians of ritualized debaucheries, specifically incest and cannibalism.[68]

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[65] This and the following, e.g., also R.L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, Yale 1984, 17 and H. Chadwick, *Justin's defence of Christianity*, in: Studies in Early Christianity 8, New York 1993, 23-45 (27).

[66] E.g. A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny. A Historical and Social Commentary*, Oxford 1966, 707 and P. Guyot / R. Klein, *Das frühe Christentum bis zum Ende der Verfolgungen. Eine Dokumentation. Vol. 1. Die Christen in heidnischen Staat*, Darmstadt 1993, 322.

[67] Fronto in Minucius Felix, Octavius 9.5-6 and 31. Compare with Marcus Aurelius, *Ad se ipsum* 3.16. There is no evidence to suggest that Pliny had either heard or believed rumours about incest among Christians.

[68] E.g. Aristides, apol. 17; Just., 1 apol. 26f.; 29.2 and Just., 2 apol. 12.2; Athen., leg. 31-36; and Tert., apol. 4 and 7-9. E.g. also Just., dial. 10; Theo., Autol. 1.9-11, 3.4 and 3.14f.; and Tatian, Or. 25.3-28.1 and 33.1f.

3.3.2. Debauchery in Apologies: the Apology

In this case the apologist, like Tertullian, could simply deny with a straight forward *controversia facti*;[69] the Christians did not engage in cannibalism and incest whenever they gathered. But of course none of the apologists could resist the opportunity to provide a more elaborate defence.

Firstly, by turning the accusation against the accusers, Aristides for instance writing (apol. 17.2):

> The Greeks, then O king, because they practise foul things in sleeping with males, and with mother and sister and daughter, turn the ridicule of their foulness upon the Christians.

The later apologists employed the same kind of *retorsio* in their refutations of these allegations. Justin, for instance, alluding to the sprinkling of the blood of executed criminals on the alter of Jupiter Latiaris; Athenagoras, for instance, alluding to the myths about the intercourses of Zeus with his mother Rhea, his daughter Kore and his sister Hera; and finally Tertullian, amongst other arguments, used his North African setting and referred to the ill-reputed Punic practice of sacrificing children for Saturn and his knowledge of Roman history to allude to the story about how the Catiline made his co-conspirators seal their pact with human blood mixed with wine.[70]

Secondly, as another means of redirecting the suspicion of such crimes, Justin mentions it as a possibility that followers of Simon Magus or Marcion might be practicing the debaucheries that true Christians were wrongly accused of.[71]

Finally, the apologists pointed to Christian ethically and dietary norms as a further refutation of the accusations for incest and canni-

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[69] Tert., apol. 7-9. E.g. also R.D. Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric and the art of Tertullian*, Oxford 1971, 46-48 and 76.

[70] Just., 2 apol. 12.5f. For this ritual and allegations about it see also Tatian, Or.29; Lact., inst. 21.6; Porph., abst. 2.56; Thyssen, 1996, 142f. and I. Gradel, *Jupiter Latiaris and human blood. Fact or fiction?* in: CM 53 (2002), 297-303; Athen., leg. 32.1 (compare Aristides, apol. 9-11) and Tert., apol. 9.2 and 9.9 (cf. Sall., Cat. 22).

[71] Just, 1 apol. 26.1-7.

balism.[72] In relation to the last charge, Tertullian for instance wrote (apol. 9.13f.):

> Your crimes ought to blush before us Christians, for we do not even reckon the blood of animals among natural food. Therefore we abstain even from eating animals which have been strangled or have died of themselves, lest we should in any way be polluted even by blood which is buried within the flesh [...] how absurd it is for you to believe that they, who you are assured, abhor the blood of beasts, are panting for the blood of man, unless perchance you have found the former more palatable!

3.3.3. The Charge of Debaucheries in Martyr-narratives

Pliny's letter, Fronto's speech and the apologists' refutations of the allegations of debauchery when taken together are compelling evidence that rumours about such Christian crimes did circulate. But, is Pliny's letter not, at the same time, evidence that the Roman authorities did not take these allegations seriously? And should this not make us expect that charges of Christian debauchery will not figure in the martyr-narratives?

First of all, they seldom do figure in the martyr-narratives. Secondly, I have elsewhere argued that Pliny's letter and Trajan's answer did not - to the degree that is often imagined in modern scholarship - set a precedent for the legal treatment of Christians for the rest of the 2nd century.[73] The practise of accusation and condemnation of the Christian name had existed previously, and - contrary to what has been postulated, both in antiquity and in modern times - some of the practises described in later sources did not in fact correspond to the practise followed by Pliny and approved by Trajan: e.g. Pliny made apostates or defendants pleading not guilty to the charge of being Christians sacrifice to the gods, because he believed this to be proof that they were not Christians - he had no second thoughts about executing confessing and obstinate Christians whereas, in later martyr-narratives and in Tertullian's descrip-

[72] E.g. Aristides, apol. 15-17 and Athen., leg. 32.2.

[73] Engberg 2007, 205f.

tion of the practise of Roman governors, we find such magistrates torturing confessing Christians trying to force them to sacrifice.

The latter practise, however, is even stronger evidence that magistrates seldom presumed the Christians to be cannibals. As Ste. Croix once wittingly wrote concerning this:

> If you take charges of cannibalism seriously, you do not pardon the cannibals simply because they tear up their membership cards of the Cannibals' Club.[74]

According to Lane Fox, the result of this was that no leading Roman ever took these kinds of rumours seriously again.[75] But this is an overstatement. As we have already seen, Fronto, the leading Roman rhetorician, magistrate and tutor to two emperors in the middle of the 2nd century, accused Christians of incest and cannibalism. And as we shall now see, such allegations did play a prominent role in the persecution of Christians in Lyon during the reign of Marcus Aurelius.[76]

In the contemporary letter relating about the martyrs in Lyon the author writes (Mart.Lyon [= Eus., h.e. 5.1,14f.]):

> Some of our pagan domestic slaves were seized. For the governor had ordered a public investigation of all Christians. The domestic slaves, ensnared by Satan, fearing the tortures they saw the faithful suffering and being also urged on by the soldiers, falsely accused us of Thyestean dinners and Oedipean intercourse, and many other things which are not only unlawful for us to speak or to think about, but which we cannot even imagine were ever done by men. But when these stories were rumoured, all the people raged against us, so that even those whose attitude had been moderate before on account of their friendship with us now became very angry and gnashed their teeth at us. Thus that which was spoken by our Lord was fulfilled: The time will come when whosoever kills you will think that he does God service.

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[74] Ste. Croix, 1964, 31. E.g. also Ste. Croix, 1963, 20.

[75] Lane Fox, 1986, 427.

[76] Fronto in Minucius Felix, Oct. 9.5f. and 31. Concerning Lyon, Eus., h.e. 5.1. E.g. also Engberg, 2007, 252-263.

In keeping with Ste. Croix' dictum concerning the lack of forgiveness for cannibals (or presumed cannibals), the author tells his readers how the apostates, during this persecution thus motivated by the belief that Christians were cannibals, were initially not spared but subjected to an even harsher and more demeaning treatment.[77]

On the woman Biblis, who had at first lapsed but later, while tortured, found new courage, the author writes that she contradicted the blasphemers (the accusers, interrogators or tormentors) saying about the Christians (Mart.Lyon [= Eus., h.e. 5.1,25]): "How could such people devour children when they are not even allowed to drink the blood of brute beasts?" This answer is interesting since she is here offering a refutation corresponding to the refutation offered in a more elaborate way by Tertullian 20 years later in his *Apologeticum* and quoted above: the Christian distaste for the blood of animals should make it obvious that Christians would not pant for the blood of infants.

Later in the narrative another martyr, Attalus, like the apologists (only shorter) refuted the allegations with a *retorsio* saying (Mart. Lyon [= Eus., h.e. 5.1,52]): "Look you, what you do is cannibalism! But we are not cannibals, nor do we perform any other sinful act." Still, the letter offers evidence that Christians were not normally treated as cannibals by Roman magistrates. First of all, the initial practice of the governor in Lyon not to pardon apostates is clearly described as surprising both to the author of the letter and to the apostates themselves.[78] Secondly, like Pliny, the governor in Lyon asks his master, the emperor Marcus Aurelius, for a rescript about his treatment of Christians.[79] And although this rescript is not preserved, the author of the narrative claims that the emperor had ordered the release of apostates.

3.4. Apologetic Arguments in Martyrs' Dialogues or in Authors' Comments

We have already seen, in martyr-narratives, how martyrs in dialogue with magistrates were met by accusations familiar from apologetic works and how these martyrs would sometimes repel these

[77] This and the following, Mart.Lyon (Eus., h.e. 5.1,33-35).

[78] Mart.Lyon (Eus., h.e. 5.1,33-35).

[79] This and the following, Mart.Lyon (Eus., h.e. 5.1,44-47).

charges by using arguments familiar from apologies. In this section, we will compare a number of other devices and topoi found in martyr-narratives with passages from contemporary apologies. Other comparisons could have been made, such as the apologetic "proof from prophecy" (e.g. Athen., leg. 7.3) also found in martyr-narratives in the dialogue of martyrs with magistrates (e.g. Mart. Just. A2 and B2).

3.4.1. Reversion of Charges

In ancient trials, it was a known and used practise in speeches for the defence that the advocate would reverse the charges and accuse the plaintiff of the same crimes as he was charging the defendant with.[80] This device, known as retorsio, was used extensively by Christian apologists from Aristides to Tertullian[81]; with the greatest sarcasm by Tertullian.

If we look again at the passage from Tertullian's *Apologeticum* by which I began my presentation, Tertullian here states the obvious: the magistrate is the judge. Instantly, however, Tertullian continues in a quite different tone, claiming that both the laws and the governors are unjust when condemning Christians: the governors are portrayed as the accused (apol. 1.4): "This then, is the first case (*primam causam*) that we [scil. the Christians] raise against you [scil. the magistrates], the injustice (*iniquitatis*) of your hatred of the name of Christian."

Tertullian maintains and intensifies similar rhetorical tactics throughout the *Apologeticum* and on into his apology addressed to Scapula. Tertullian and the Christians are the accusers whereas pagans and the magistrates are the accused, with God as the judge (e.g. apol. 1.4; 4.1-4; 9.1, 15.7; 28.3; 29.5; 30.7; 35.6-36.1; 37.2; 41.1; 49.3f. and 50.12-16; Scap. 1; 3 and 5). Tertullian even threatens Scapula with divine retribution and narrates how God had punished other persecuting governors: e.g. Vigellius Saturninus from Africa with the loss of his eyesight and Claudius Lucius from Cappadocia with worms and death (Scap. 3).

A few pages above, we left the bishop Polycarp at the stadium in Smyrna, where the proconsul implied and the crowd shouted that

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[80] E.g. Lysias, Sim.

[81] E.g. Aristides, apol. 17.2; Just., 1 apol. 26-29 and 2 apol. 12; Athen., leg. 32-35.

Christians were ungodly and where the proconsul made it clear to Polycarp that he would be burned if he failed to recant. Polycarp's reply is interesting; he assumes the role of accuser and redirects the threats and accusations back to the accusers: it is not Christians who are ungodly; on the contrary, it is the gathered assembly of pagans who are guilty of ungodliness (Mart.Polyc. 9.2). In the same manner: when the proconsul threatens Polycarp that he will be burned alive unless he repents, Polycarp, in reply, implores the proconsul to repent by threatening that he will be burned in an eternal fire for failing to do so (Mart.Polyc. 10f.). Similar reversions of charges and reversions of threats are found in other martyr-narratives.[82]

We know of examples from ancient forensic speeches where the speaker rhetorically reversed some, or indeed several, of the roles in court, making the defendant appear as the plaintiff, the judges as the accused, etc.[83]

3.4.2. Respect for Authorities

Both Justin and Tertullian stated their willingness and divinely ordained obligation to obey and honour emperor and magistrates whenever this obedience and honour did not conflict with the commandments of God or impair his honour.[84]

This apologetic topos is also found in condensed form in two of our contemporary martyr-narratives. According to Marcion, the author of the account of Polycarp's martyrdom, Polycarp, during the interrogation, answers the proconsul (Mart.Polyc. 10.2): "We have been taught to pay respect to the authorities and powers that God has assigned us." And in the acts of the Scillitan martyrs, Donata said: "Honour Caesar as Caesar; but fear God" (Mart.Scill. 9).

3.4.3. Martyrs in Apologetics, Proof from Martyrdom

Below we will see three examples of how apologists referred to martyrs, martyrdoms, etc. And we will see three examples of how this was used in answer to specific allegations against Christians.

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[82] E.g. Mart.Carp. A7f.; Eus., h.e. 5.1,52; Mart.Perp. 17 and 18.8.

[83] The most prominent examples are Lysias, Sim. and Cicero, 1 Ver.

[84] E.g. Just., 1 apol. 10f. and Tert., apol. 28-35.

More examples could have been provided.[85] We could also have seen how Justin cunningly argued that the courage of Christians, when threatened by persecution, proved that Christians could not be guilty of political machinations and disloyalty to the emperor: otherwise they would have gone into hiding and, when caught, they would never have confessed (1 apol. 11).[86]

3.4.4. The Courage of Martyrs disproving Allegations of Debauchery and the Courage of Martyrs leading to Conversions

We have already seen that Justin devoted much of his energy as an apologist to argue that the allegations about Christians living immoral lives were absurd. One of his arguments was a proof from the martyr's courage (Just., 2 apol. 12.1f.):

> For I myself too, when I was delighting in the teachings of Plato, and heard the Christians slandered, and saw them fearless of death, and of all other things which are counted fearful, saw that it was impossible that they could be living in wickedness and pleasure. For what sensual or intemperate person, or whoever counts it good to feast on human flesh, could welcome death that he might be deprived of his enjoyments, and would not rather always continue the present life, and try to escape the observation of the rulers; and much less would he denounce himself when the consequence would be death.

The courage of the martyrs had thus motivated Justin's own conversion. We have already discussed how and why it was prudent for Justin to refer to his own experiences and conversion. Now we will discuss why he tells his readers that the courage of martyrs produces conversions, and why he was not alone amongst apologists in using that kind of argumentation. Tertullian, of course, is famous for writing to the governors: "Your tortures accomplish nothing; rather they

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[85] E.g. the examples in Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 189f.

[86] E.g. also Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 196f.

are an enticement to our school. We become more numerous every time we are hewn down by you - the blood of Christians is seed."[87]

A Christian reader (and no one will surely dispute that contemporary Christians read the apologies of Justin and Tertullian) living in a potentially hostile world threatened by spouts of persecution might find it consoling to read that the persecution of Christians and the death of martyrs simply represented a victory that would only serve to further God's plan. But what about the pagan readers: the addressees, the magistrates and even the emperors? If it was the intention that they should read this, how did Justin and Tertullian intend them to be persuaded by it?

In Roman legal thinking, a law or a legal procedure or practise ought to be marked either by *elegantia* or *utilitas*, i.e. it ought to be either *elegant* or *utilitarian* and, of course, preferably both. A law, legal procedure or practise was considered elegant if it fitted well and logically into the rest of the legal system and if it did not contradict the principels behind other laws or procedures. A law, legal enactment, procedure or practise was considered utilitarian if it was sought to be beneficial to society and the state.

Both Justin and Tertullian had taken the trouble of arguing quite convincingly that the procedure for persecution of Christians by Roman authorities was surely marked by anything but *elegantia*.[88] By claiming that, because of the impressive courage of martyrs, the persecution of Christians prompts more people to convert to Christianity, Justin and Tertullian, assuming that the authorities want to limit the number of Christians, provide a strong argument for the case that the persecution of Christians is in fact anything but beneficial to the interest of the magistrates, it is indeed counterproductive. A Christian reader of the apologies would hardly need to be convinced that the persecution of Christians was detrimental to the assumed interest of governors and emperors in limiting the number of Christians. These references to martyrs in the apologies thus indicate that Justin and Tertullian at least intended their works to be read by the addressees.

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[87] Tert., apol. 50.13. E.g. also Just., 1 apol. 21; 25.

[88] Just., 1 apol. 4 and Tert., apol. 2. E.g. also Athen., leg. 1.3-2.5.

3.5. A Martyr-narrative in an Apology: another Defence against alleged Debaucheries

The easiest way of "proving" that it is fruitful to study the relationship between martyr-narratives and apologetics is by analyzing how and for what reasons Justin, with some detail, narrated about the execution of two Christians in an apology to the emperor Marcus Aurelius.

In his Second Apology, Justin records the story of a newly converted Christian woman.[89] Justin emphasises that the women used to be both promiscuous and a drunkard until she became a Christian and reformed her ways. After having reformed her own life, she began to criticize her pagan husband because he persisted in an even more immoral life. She was, however, unable to reform his life, and since her husband was acting worse than ever, she finally divorced him. Justin comments that (Just., 2 apol. 2.7):

> Her excellent husband should have been rejoicing that those deeds which before she committed recklessly with the slaves and the day-labourers, taking her pleasure in drunkenness and every sort of vice, and that she had even tried to get him to stop.

But the husband apparently did not share Justin's sentiments and instead he brought charges against his wife for divorcing him without proper reason, adding that she was a Christian. Later the husband added charges against the woman's Christian teacher, Ptolemaeus, leading through a concatenation of events to his martyrdom and to the martyrdom of a Christian bystander at the trial, Lucius, protesting against the verdict.

Both this account and the prologue are written in a context where Justin is defending Christians against the accusation that they live an immoral life. It is therefore evident that the account serves an apologetic purpose: to describe the woman's conversion to Christianity as a reform from immorality to morality would seem to disprove such allegations. Justin further wanted his readers to perceive the courage and indignation of Lucius in stepping forward and in protest offering

[89] Just., 2 apol. 2.

himself up for execution as proof that the Christians could in no way be immoral people given over to pleasure and lust. This is evident from the subsequent account of Justin's own conversion, the account we quoted from above (Just., 2 apol. 12.1f.).

4. Conclusion and Summary: Acts of Martyrs and Apologetics

The martyr-narratives and the apologies are very different kinds of texts, as indeed the two "groups" of texts are also shown to be heterogeneous. In spite of this, we have seen many similarities regarding the issues analyzed:

- the accusations leading to the trials and condemnations of martyrs are similar to the accusations that the apologists are defending Christians against.
- the rather few and condensed arguments and comments that martyrs and authors of martyr-narratives offer to rebut such accusations are related to the more comprehensive defences of Christianity found in apologetic texts.
- apologists wrote about Christian martyrs, martyr-ideology and martyrdoms in their apologetic works in order to refute a range of familiar accusations against Christians. One of the apologists, Justin, even inserted a reference to martyrdoms of a narrative character.

This can partly be explained by the fact that the martyr-narratives probably originated in the same milieu as the apologies, written in the same years, in Christian congregations and partly at least with a Christian audience in mind. But this study has also lent credence to the view that both martyr-narratives and apologies dealt with real accusations, real opponents, real persecutions and not just papyri- or parchment-tigers.

Martyr-narratives and apologetics are thus found to be excellent sources for studying the character of opposition. This is substantiated by a study of the few (fragments) of contemporary literary polemics written by pagans against Christians, which bring forward the same kinds of accusations for ungodliness, superstition and debauchery that figure prominently in both martyr-narratives and apologetics.[90]

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[90] Engberg, *Fordømmelse*, 2006, 291-337.

Apologetics and Orthodoxy

Jörg Ulrich

The subject I am going to deal with arose from considerations of the planning committee of this conference. It sprang from the idea that we ought to look back to the proceedings of our scholarly project on apologetics in the last years, and should look ahead as well to what will be our subject in the coming next years, namely norms, normativity, and orthodoxy. Apologetics and orthodoxy: what do these two phenomena have to do with each other, and how could they possibly be related?

First of all, it is clear that both subjects are key issues in any religion and in any theology. Both - apologetics and orthodoxy - belong to the traditional canon of subjects in ancient history as well in early church history. Most of the early Christian sources that have come down to us deal either with matters of apologetics or with matters of heresy and orthodoxy, regardless of whether viewed broadly or narrowly. Aspects of both apologetics and orthodoxy attract academic attention, and have done so since the nineteenth century,[1]

[1] For orthodoxy (and heresy) see A. Hilgenfeld, *Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums. Urkundlich dargestellt*, Leipzig 1884; W. Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, Tübingen 1934. ²1964 (=BHTh 10); R.A. Kraft, *The Development of the Concept of "Orthodoxy" in Early Christianity*, in: FS M.C. Tenney, Grand Rapids 1975, 47-59; N. Brox, *Häresie*, in: RAC 13 (1984), 248-297; for apologetics see G. Schmitt, *Die Apologie der ersten drei Jahrhunderte in historisch-systematischer Darstellung*, Mainz 1890; J. Zahn, *Die apologetischen Grundgedanken in der Litteratur der ersten drei Jahrhunderte systematisch dargestellt*, Würzburg 1890; W.H. Carlslaw, *The Early Christian Apologetics*, London 1911; J. Geffcken, *Die altchristliche Apologetik*, in: NJKA 8 (1905), 625-666; A. Hauck, *Apologetik in der Alten Kirche*, Leipzig 1918; G. Bardy, *Apologetik*, in: RAC 1 (1950), 533-543; L.W. Barnard, *Apologetik*, in: TRE 3 (1978), 371-411.

maintaining their place in scholarly discussion until today.[2] Apologetics and orthodoxy both belong to the traditional curriculum of theological teaching at our universities.[3] But besides this testimony of the relevance of both our subjects, the question remains: what do they have to do with each other? Are there any links between them? Are both on a similar level allowing them to be compared? Or do they belong to different categories, for instance apology referring to theological argument and method, whereas orthodoxy would belong more to the category of theological judgment? Do apologetics explicitly or implicitly create an idea of orthodoxy? Does orthodoxy necessarily imply a tendency to defend itself in the sense that its claim to truth must be justified again and again - and is it, from this point of view, necessarily apologetic? I think that all this is indeed the case and I will now develop a little on this idea, presenting two major chapters. The first one is entitled 'Apologetics and Orthodoxy', and the second 'Orthodoxy and Apologetics'. At the close I will come to a brief conclusion.

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[2] For orthodoxy (and heresy) see H.E. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth. A Study in the Relations between Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Early Church*, New York 1978; H. Chadwick, *Heresy and Orthodoxy in the Early Church*, Aldershot 1991 (= a collection of essays); E. Ferguson, *Orthodoxy, Heresy and Schism in Early Christianity*, New York 1993; for apologetics see M. Edwards / M. Goodman / S. Price / C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews and Christians*, Oxford 1999; R. Haehling (ed.), *Rom und das himmlische Jerusalem. Die frühen Christen zwischen Anpassung und Ablehnung*, Darmstadt 2000; M. Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum. Die Kontroverse um den christlichen Wahrheitsanspruch in den ersten Jahrhunderten*, Paderborn ²2001; A. Wlosok / F. Paschoud (eds.), *L'apologétique chrétienne gréco-latine à l'époque prénicénienne*, EnAC 51, Vandœuvres-Genève 2004; D. Brakke / A.-C. Jacobsen / J. Ulrich (eds.), *Beyond Reception. Mutual Influences between Antique Religion, Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ECCA 1, Frankfurt 2006.

[3] See J. Ulrich / U. Heil, *Klausurenkurs Kirchengeschichte. 61 Entwürfe für das 1. Theologische Examen*, Göttingen 2002, no. 3 (Häresie und Orthodoxie im 2. Jahrhundert, 31f.) and no. 4 (Apologetik in der Zeit der Alten Kirche, 33f.) and CD Rom *Basiswissen Kirchengeschichte. Daten, Fakten, Zusammenhänge von den Anfänge bis heute*, Göttingen 2007.

1. Apologetics and Orthodoxy

Apologetics[4] of whatever philosophy, religion, or confession always imply an aspect of self-introduction, self-definition, and self-representation. Apologists who intend to defend their own religion are obliged to say who they are and what their religion is all about. This is the general task of apologetics at all times, irrespective of concrete historical circumstances. In the second century, the major aim of the Christian apologists was to convince the emperors that the persecutions were unjust. Opposition to denunciations, pogroms and court cases brought forth the earliest Christian apologies,[5] calling for justice and veracity.[6] To achieve this, they would not only have to refute particular prejudices against Christianity, but also to give a thorough and positive account of what Christianity actually was. Justin Martyr, in his first Apology, written around the year 153, says: "It is then our task to offer to all an opportunity of inspecting our life and teachings".[7] The same can be observed in Tertullian at the beginning of the third century. In his *Apologeticum* he sets about insisting that the foes of the Christians understand nothing of the religion they are persecuting. The Christians thus demand that they not be condemned unjustly, and thus consider it only fair that those prosecuting them recognize the true nature of their views. It follows - for the authors of the apologetics at least - that the Romans would then be obliged to desist in the persecutions, once they realized that the views and conduct of the Christians was conducive to the *salus publica*.[8] However, the task of public accountability was not restricted to the times of the persecutions. It remained as important

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[4] I use the term 'apologetics' in a broader sense, not that restricted to the literary genre of 'apologia', but as a technique of argumentation with apologetic, polemic and missionary aspects that can appear in many different literary genres. For the theoretical background in general, see A. Klostergard Petersen's essay in this volume.

[5] Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 34f.

[6] Just., 1 apol. 12.11.

[7] Just., 1 apol. 3.4. My translation follows St. Justin Martyr, *The First and Second Apologies*, translated with introduction and notes by L.W. Barnard, ACW 56, New York 1997.

[8] Tert., apol. 1.2-4.

after the persecutions had stopped due to the edict of tolerance by the emperor Galerius in 311.

Some 160 years later than Justin Martyr, and only a few years after the great persecution, Eusebius of Caesarea opens his eminent *Praeparatio evangelica* as follows: "By the present treatise, which includes in its design the *Demonstration of the Gospel*, I purpose to show the nature of Christianity to those who know not what it means."[9] In the fifth century, at a time when Christianity had become the majority religion in the Roman empire, Theodoret of Cyrus writes in his *Curatio affectionum graecarum*:

> Since those who are ignorant of what we and they [the Greeks] teach respectively about the end [of the world] and of the judgement should be informed, this is the teaching that the eleventh chapter proposes to those who wish to encounter it.[10]

The reasons why the aspect of self-definition in apologetics is so important are easy to grasp: the apologists want to enable the authorities of the Roman empire to come to an unbiased appraisal of Christian life and doctrine.[11] They want to enable the intellectual opponents of Christianity to reconsider their prejudice by supplying them with authentic information.[12] They also want to invite Chris-

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[9] Eus., p.e. 1.1,1. My translation follows *Eusebii Pamphili Evangelicae Praeparationis Libri XV, ad codices manuscriptos denuo collatos recensuit anglice nunc primum reddidit notis et indicibus instruxit* E.H. Gifford, Oxford 1903.

[10] Thdt., cur. praef. 14. My translation follows I. Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, London 2006.

[11] Just., 1 apol. 2.1f.: "Reason dictates that those who are truly philosophers should honor and love only the truth, declining to follow the opinions of the ancients, if they are worthless. For not only does sound reason dictate that one should not follow those who do or teach unjust things, but the lover of truth should choose by all means [...] to speak and do righteous things. So you, then, since you are called pious, and philosophers and guardians of justice and lovers of culture, listen in every way; and it will be shown if you are such."

[12] Thdt., cur. praef. 2: "As for me, I shall explain to them what is necessary to dissolve their accusations."

tians to learn more about their own religion, and especially address those who have only very recently turned to Christianity.[13] These various purposes required a clear definition of what Christianity actually is and what it means. Apologetics want to provide answers for "everyone who searches with exact inquiry into the opinions held among us."[14] In this respect, self-definition is an indispensable immanent task of apologetic work,[15] and self-definition does not only imply saying what Christianity is, but it also means setting up clear boundaries, defining what it is not.

In this process of necessary self-definition, the early apologists employ criteria for true Christianity. They make use of criteria that already existed and also add new criteria helping to make the self-definition of Christianity clearer and more precise. By doing this, they create an idea of a 'correct' form of Christianity. They begin to create 'orthodoxy'. And in creating orthodoxy in the sense of defining what Christianity actually is, they implicitly create 'heresy' as well: everything that does not fit with their criteria of true Christianity, but nevertheless claims to be Christian, must be identified as 'false Christianity'. False Christianity is nothing but heresy. It is, of course, important to see that Justin and the other apologists do not acknowledge these 'false' forms of Christianity as Christianity at all; they think that Christians who do not meet their criteria are in fact not Christians at all[16] - even if they call themselves Christians or affirm that they are.[17]

It may be noticed that in the early apologists, who are familiar with the philosophical thought of Antiquity, the distinction between true and false Christianity does not only pertain to doctrinal

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[13] Eus., p.e. 1.1,12: "For in this way I think my argument will proceed in due order to the more perfect teaching of the Demonstration of the Gospel, and to the understanding of our deeper doctrines, if my preparatory treatise should help as a guide, by occupying the place of elementary introduction, and suiting itself to our recent converts from among the heathen."

[14] Eus., p.e. 1.1,11.

[15] Eus., p.e. 1.1,2: "But first of all, it is well to define clearly what the word 'Gospel' means to express."

[16] Justin explicitly says that "they are not really Christians" (1 apol. 16.8).

[17] Justin calls them "Christians only in name [...]" (1 apol. 16.14).

convictions, but also to moral and ethical standards. Moral conduct is a decisive aspect in the self-definition of early Christianity, and it is not less important as a certificate of Christian identity than are the major ideas of faith and doctrinal consensus. *Philosophia* and *eusebeia* belong together, and they both imply correct theoretical thought as well as excellent moral conduct. This is important for us to note because we often tend to reduce the problem of orthodoxy and heresy to matters of theological dispute, as was indeed the case in the great controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries.

For Justin, however, ethics is an essential part of Christian self-definition and identity, not less essential than the doctrinal convictions according to the *regula fidei*.[18] People who call themselves Christians but do not live according to the moral standards taught by Jesus (Justin refers to the Sermon on the Mount here) are not Christians, they are 'ethical heretics'; and because they are not Christians, they should not profit from the possible success of Justin's apologetic efforts. If the emperors decided to cease persecuting the Christians, these 'ethical heretics' should still suffer the punishment they deserved because of their moral deficiency. They can not plead to be Christians. Justin writes:

> Those who are found not living as He taught should understand that they are not really Christians, even if they profess with the lips the teachings of Christ. [...] And as to those who are not living in accordance with His teachings, but are Christians only in name, we demand that all such should be punished by you.[19]

Apologists define what Christianity is, morally and dogmatically, and in so doing they create distinctions between Christianity and other religions on the one hand and between 'true' and 'false' Christianity on the other. But that is of course only a detail of the whole picture. Another detail is the fact that the early apologists were all well aware of the fact that in their time Christianity was no longer

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[18] See J. Ulrich, *Ethik als Ausweis christlicher Identität bei Justin Martyr*, in: ZEE 50 (2006), 21-28.

[19] 1 apol. 16.8; 16.14.

a uniform religion (if it ever had been). Splits and separations had already occurred. The early apologists had to face the fact that there were different doctrines, different churches, and different 'confessions' - and they all viewed themselves as Christians. Even the early apologists of the second century look back to some of these splits, and the same applies even more so to the later apologists such as Tertullian in the early third century or Eusebius in the early fourth. Regardless of the particular time in which they were writing and what particular 'heresies' they knew, they had to deal with the problem of Christian diversity when pursuing their apologetic task. Justin not only provides the emperors with criteria for true and false Christianity, but probably also his own school. He also has to inform them about people who call themselves Christians but do not belong to the same institution, to the same church, or do not share the same philosophical and theological views that he has in mind when he talks about Christianity.[20] The claim to truth was bitterly contested amongst the different Christian groups, schools and churches. This conflict influenced the apologist's arguments in attempts at defending Christianity and at developing a dialogue with the pagan environment. Justin and his successors not only have to prove that Christianity is undeservedly persecuted, and they do not only intend to show that Christianity is the only one and right philosophy and religion in general. If they want to maintain their claim to truth, they also have to make it evident that 'their' Christianity is the true Christianity, differing from - and superior to - the others.

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[20] 1 apol. 26.4-8: "A certain man Menander, also a Samaritan, of the village of Capparetaea, who had been a disciple of Simon's, and inspired by demons, we know to have deceived many while he was in Antioch by his magical arts, who even persuaded his followers that they would never die; and even now there are some living who profess this from him. And there is a certain Markion of Pontus, who is even now teaching his disciples to believe in some other god greater than the Demiurge; who by the aid of the demons, has caused many of every race of men and women to speak blasphemies and to deny that God is the Maker of this Universe, and to profess that another, who is grater than He, has done greater works. All who take their opinions from these people, as we said before, are called Christians [...]. But I have a treatise against all heresies which have arisen already composed, which I will give you if you wish to read it."

This is the point where the task of apologetics and the distinction between heresy and orthodoxy meet. Due to the circumstances of manuscript tradition (and destruction) only the apologetic products of the later orthodox side have been preserved; it would be highly instructive to have an 'heretic' apology by a Marcionite or Gnostic theologian and follow him defending Christianity in the way he understood it. It is regrettable that these writings (and doubtless there were such) are lost. However, we can confidently assume that the techniques of argumentation in 'orthodox' and 'heretic' apologetics were very similar, simply because apologetics was a well-established and elaborated literary and intellectual phenomenon in antiquity, and each intellectual defender of philosophical or religious positions would make use of it.

The close link between the tasks of self-definition and the distinction between right and wrong may be the reason why most of the early Christian apologists did not confine themselves to writing apologies or texts with an apologetic character, but also produced treatises that directly turned against 'heretic' movements. Justin recommends to the emperor to read his *Treatise against all heresies*[21] that has apparently been lost.[22] Tertullian dealt with heresies in his *Apologeticum*[23] and furthermore produced some of the most important texts against particular heresies in the whole history of the early church such as *Adversus Hermogenem, De carne Christi, Adversus Valentinianos, Adversus Praxean,* and *Adversus Marcionem;* moreover, he developed an elaborate theory of heretical thinking in his *De praescriptione haereticorum.* Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica* has many apologetic dimensions,[24] and heresy is an integral, though of course

[21] 1 apol. 26.8.

[22] For the question of possible reconstructions of parts of that text, see now E. Norelli, *Que pouvons-nous reconstituer du* Syntagma contre les heresies *de Justin? Un example,* in: RThPh 139 (2007), 167-181.

[23] Tert., apol. 47.3-10.

[24] D. König-Ockenfels, *Christliche Deutung der Weltgeschichte bei Euseb von Cäsarea,* in: Saec. 27 (1976), 348-365; A.J. Droge, *The Apologetic Dimensions of the Ecclesiastical History,* in: H.W. Attridge / G. Hata (eds.), *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism,* StPB 42, Leiden 1992, 492-509; H.C. Brennecke, *Die Kirche als Diadochai ton apostolon. Das Programm der ecclesiastica historica des Euseb,* in: O. Wischmeyer / E.-M. Becker (eds.), *Was*

negative element in the process of the rise of Christianity.[25] When Eusebius wanted to prove the truth of Christianity by demonstrating the historical 'success' of that religion, he had to explain why there were so many different institutions that all operated under the name of Christianity. His solution to the problem was not so different from that of Justin and Tertullian: the heresies are interpreted as a result of the impact of satanic or demonic power.[26] This demonic power takes possession of men, especially of immoral and vain people, thirsty for glory.[27] Those people introduce new and false doctrines in the church.[28] They "have like fierce wolves unmercifully devastated the flock of Christ".[29]

The reason why the difference between orthodoxy and heresy is so important for the apologetic task is in the exclusive claim to truth that is so typical of early Christianity. Since Christians claimed to 'possess' the only possible godly truth, they found it particularly difficult to explain why there were so many different 'Christianities' in their own contemporary world.

This aspect becomes even clearer when we turn our attention to one particular argument in Christian apologetics that was very widely used, namely the argument of the unity of truth. In nearly all of the apologetic texts we find the assertion that pagan philosophers cannot claim to have full insight into the truth because they hold so

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ist ein Text?, Neutestamentliche Entwürfe zur Theologie 1, Tübingen 2001, 81-93; J. Ulrich, *Euseb als Kirchengeschichtsschreiber*, in: E.-M. Becker (ed.), *Die antike Historiographie und die Anfänge der christlichen Geschichtsschreibung*, BZNW 129, Berlin 2005, 277-287; id., *Wie verteidigte Euseb das Christentum?*, in: A.-C. Jacobsen / J. Ulrich (eds.), *Three Greek Apologists. Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius. Drei griechische Apologeten. Origenes, Eusebius und Athanasius*, ECCA 3, Frankfurt 2007, 49-74.

[25] For the heresiographic dimension of he church history see now M. Willing, *Eusebius von Cäsarea als Häreseograph*, PTS 63, Berlin 2008.

[26] Eus., h.e. 3.26,4; 3.27,1; for Justin see 1 apol. 26.5; for Tertullian see apol. 47.3-20.

[27] See for example the list of moral defects in Tert., praescr. 41f.

[28] See for example Eus., h.e. 1.1,1. For concepts of heresiography in the early church in general see N. Brox, *Häresie*, in: RAC 13 (1986), 248-297.

[29] Eus., h.e. 1.1,1. The translation follows Eusebius, *The Church History of Eusebius*, translated with prolegomena and notes by A.C. McGeiffert, NPNF 1, Peabody ²1999, 81.

many different opinions in so many relevant questions.[30] Diversity of opinion is axiomatically taken as a proof of inadequate cognition and thus likewise wrong thinking. The early Christian apologists exert themselves to play the pagan philosophers off against each other by pointing out their different views on important subjects like God, creation, the immortality of the soul, matter, providence, the nature of man, and so on. Justin argues:

> And everything that both philosophers and poets have said concerning the immortality of the soul, or punishments after death, or contemplation of heavenly things, or doctrines like these, they have received such hints from the prophets as have enabled them to understand and expound these things. And hence there seem to be seeds of truth among all people; but they are proved not to have understood them accurately when they contradict each other.[31]

Athenagoras writes:

> Poets and philosophers fell to this task as to others by guesswork: each was stirred by his own soul through some sympathy with the 'Breath' of God to set out upon the quest that he might chance to find and understand the truth; they were able to find only that which came within the scope of their minds, but not to find the reality - not deigning to learn about God from God, but each from himself. Thus it is that each of them came to form differing beliefs about God and matter, about forms, and the universe.[32]

And Tatian concludes:

> You follow the doctrines of Plato, and a disciple of Epicurus lifts up his voice to oppose you. Again, you wish to be a dis-

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[30] Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 292f.

[31] 1 apol. 44.9f.

[32] Athen., leg. 7.2. The translation follows Athenagoras, *Embassy for the Christians*, translated and annotated by J.H. Crehan, ACW 23, New York 1955, 37.

> ciple of Aristotle, and a follower of Democritus rails at you. Pythagoras says that he was Euphorbos, and he is the heir of the doctrine of Pherecydes; but Aristotle impugns the immortality of the soul. You who receive from their predecessors doctrines which clash with one another, you the inharmonious, are fighting against the harmonious.[33]

Due to the different opinions among philosophers, philosophy appears to be a completely contradictory phenomenon, and that is why it should not enjoy any confidence. There are numerous examples for the use of this argument in Christian apologetics.[34] It serves not only to discredit philosophies, but also to prove that Christianity is the one and only true philosophy, because in contrast to any ordinary philosophy, only Christianity is harmonious, uniform, and without any contradictions. Of course anyone who makes use of this argument has to present a kind of Christianity that does not feature any contradictions, internal divisions or splits. In order to maintain their own claim to truth, Christian authors who make apologetic use of the inconsistencies and contradictions of philosophy as an argument against the truth of philosophy must present Christianity as a completely coherent matter.

The intense argumentative use of the antagonism opposing 'contradictions' and 'coherence' rendered it the more necessary to reject all Christian views differing from one's own; compared to the more ordinary task of self-definition *vis-à-vis* pagan emperors and intellectuals. This argument demanded an even sharper focus on creating the image of an undivided, philosophically and morally harmonious, and consensual Christianity. To accept different Christian parties or churches would have meant classifying Christianity on the same level as philosophy (or rather: the philosophies) that were being attacked

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[33] Tat., orat. 25.3. The translation follows Tatian the Assyrian, *Address to the Greeks*, translated by J.E. Ryland, ANF 2, Peabody ²1999, 75f.

[34] Tert., nat. 2.2,1; apol. 47.5-8; Arn., nat. 2.10; 3.37; Lact., inst. 1.1,18; 3.7,7-10; 3.15,2; 3.28,19f.; Eus., p.e. 1.7,16; 15.1,6; 15.62,15f.; Athan., inc. 50.2; Cyr., Juln. 2.16-18; Aug., civ. 18.41; Thdt., cur. 1.49; 4.4; 4.31f.; 5.10-32; 5.44-47.

precisely because of diversity - and to effectively refute the Christian claim to being the one and only true philosophy.[35]

When uniformity was taken as a proof of truth and contradictions taken as a proof of falsehood, this meant that one had to discredit all the different views within Christianity that differed from one's own as illegitimate, as not being truly Christian - or not even Christian at all. One had to suggest a Christian uniformity in thinking. This was even more attractive when one was aware of the fact that many of the pagans (and of possible pagan readers of Christian apologetic literature) shared that presupposition that diversity was a proof of falsehood, as can be seen in the critical remarks of the pagan satirist Lukian of Samosata about the different opinions held among the philosophers.[36] Since the idea of uniformity of Christianity turned out to be a major argument in the apologetic texts, the distinction between true Christianity and false Christianity came to have an integral function in early and not so early Christian apologetics.

2. Orthodoxy and Apologetics

I stick to our subject but change the perspective now. Hitherto we have been dealing with the problem of faith as true or false, and the practice within apologies and apologetic texts aimed primarily at outsiders. In this context, the distinction between heresy and orthodoxy had nevertheless played an important role in self-definition as well as in apologetic argument. I turn now to the phenomenon that - in the course of inner-Christian theological controversies - Christians found themselves in the situation that they had to prove their orthodoxy against suspicions raised by other Christians. Whereas classic early Christian apologetic literature defends Christianity against non-Christians and thereby necessarily creates distinctions between true Christianity and false Christianity, we now turn

[35] Tert., apol. 47.9: "And I have alluded to this, lest any one becoming acquainted with the variety of parties among us, this might seem to him to put us on a level with the philosophers, and he might condemn the truth from different ways in which it is defended. But we at once put in a plea in bar against these tainters of our purity [...]".

[36] Luk., Herm. 14.

to Christians who needed to defend their theological convictions against other Christians. In this situation, they employ the literary and argumentative traditions of apologetics: the well-established techniques of literary apologetic self-defence. Formally, the argument resembles the apologetic arguments of early Christian authors against the pagans. The methods are the same. But it is even closer to the fashion in which the great philosophers and rhetorical speakers of the Greek and Latin traditions had argued apologetically when defending their ideas or themselves against their opponents. New is that apologetics become a wide-spread phenomenon *within* Christianity. We can speak of inner-Christian apologies here, or rather of *apologiae ecclesiasticae*. *Apologiae ecclesiasticae* defend a Christian person's orthodoxy against the reproach of heresy made by Christians. These inner-Christian apologies belong to the fourth centuries and later. Many of them are directed to the (Christian) emperor himself to convince him of the author's innocence and orthodoxy. Their *Sitz im Leben* is the inner-Christian theological or political controversy. I shall mention two important examples, Origen and Athanasius.

Origen is of particular interest for the question of apologetics and orthodoxy, because in his eminent works he unites more or less all possible aspects of apologetics. He was a 'classical' apologist in the sense that he wrote a long treatise to refute pagan criticism of Christianity (*Contra Celsum*), he dealt with 'heretic' movements such as the Valentinians and tried to disprove their ideas, and - at least according to Eusebius - he was widely appreciated as a competent referee in theological controversies.[37] Nevertheless during his lifetime,[38] and even more so after his death, he became an issue of the question of heresy and orthodoxy himself. As doubt about Origen's orthodoxy grew from the beginning of the fourth century, Pamphilus of Caesarea[39] and Eusebius of Caesarea, two of Origen's most passionate successors and adherents,[40] defended him by writ-

[37] Eus., h.e. 6.33,2; 36,4; 37.

[38] Eus., h.e. 6.8,5; 19,11; 36,4; cf. Ruf., de adult. 7 and Hier., apol. c. Ruf. 2.18f.

[39] See J. Ulrich, *Pamphilus*, in: ⁴RGG 6 (2003), 843.

[40] On Eusebius and Origen see H. Strutwolf, *Der Origenismus des Euseb von Caesarea*, in: W.A. Bienert / U. Kühneweg (eds.), *Origeniana Septima*, Leuven 1999, 141-147.

ing the *Apologia pro Origene*.[41] In doing so, they opened a long literary tradition of *apologiae ecclesiasticae*. Following the development of that tradition we encounter a considerable number of texts, by e.g. Eunomius of Cyzicus (*Apologia* and *Apologia apologiae*), Athanasius of Alexandria (*Apologia ad Constantium*), Cyrill of Alexandria (*Apologeticus ad Theodosium imperatorem*) and Rufinus (*Apologia ad Anastasium, Apologia contra Hieronymum*). These texts defend a Christian against Christians. In contrast to earlier Christian apologies, they defend individuals - Pamphilus' *Apologia pro Origene* formally resembles the classical *Apology of Socrates*,[42] although the closest literary parallels are to be found in the *Apologia pro Origene* and the *Antidosis* of Isocrates.[43]

In his analysis of the *Apologia*, Rowan Williams has underscored that Pamphilus had to defend Origen against people who claimed that Origen was a successor of Paul of Samosata.[44] Being "Trinitarian pluralists"[45] themselves, they may have argued that Origen did not distinguish the different "persons" in the trinity thoroughly enough. They blame him for calling the Son *innatus* (like the Father).[46] Paul,

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[41] Only the praefatio and the first of altogether six books have survived, and they have only survived in Rufinus' Latin translation that was produced nearly one century later. See G. Röwekamp (ed.), Pamphilus von Caesaerea, *Apologia pro Origene. Apologie für Origenes*, FC 80, Turnhout 2005. See also Eus., h.e. 6.33,4. Eusebius discredits the critics of Origen as 'faultfinders'. It is clear that the whole sixth book of the *historia ecclesiastica* of Eusebius can be understood as another *Apologia pro Origene*, taking apology and apologetics in a slightly broader sense than in the stricter sense of the genre of apologia.

[42] Whereas these *apologiae eccelsiasticae* resemble Platon's *Apology of Socrates*, the earlier Christian apologies have more similarities with the genre of *libri contra gentes* (that is how Jerome saw the *Apology* of Justin Martyr, Hier., vir. ill. 23),

[43] Isocr., or. 15.

[44] R. Williams, *Damnosa haereditas: Pamphilus' Apology and the Reputation of Origen*, in: E.L. Grasmück / H.C. Brennecke / C. Markschies (eds.), *Logos. FS für L. Abramowski*, BZNW 67, Berlin 1993, 151-169 (162f.).

[45] R. Williams, 1993, 160.

[46] This is the first and probably most important reproach of nine altogether; see Williams, 1993, 152f.

of whom we know theologically little and nothing certain,[47] may have taught that incarnation was to be understood as the dwelling of the Logos, which is *homousios* with God, in human flesh. Other reproaches against Origen aimed at his allegorical exegesis, his idea of the reconciliation of all men, and his doctrine of the transmigration of the souls.[48]

Pamphilus might have chosen other literary forms to deal with these criticisms against his theological hero. A polemical treatise against the accusers would have been conceivable. Nevertheless, he turned to the 'classical' genre of Apology (and at the same time created a new sort of apology in the sense of an *apologia ecclesiastica*).[49] We do not know the reasons why he chose to do so. It is highly speculative to assume that the decision was due to his disposition as a rather cautious character.[50] Instead, it should be stressed that the genre of *apology* furnished him with many literary techniques that served his aim of defending Origen. To refute the different reproaches, he could take them up one by one. He could aim at a rather broad readership, including not only the direct opponents but addressing many other people who may have become uncertain about Origen's theology. He could stage the defence as a kind of court hearing where the readers are invited to take the role of the judges.[51] He could make use of proof from direct quote, namely from Origen's *De principiis*, to show that the author of that text was orthodox. Working with quotes serving as proof texts was not at all unusual in early Christian apologetics, nor was it foreign to the

[47] J. Rist, *Paul von Samosata*, in: ⁴RGG 6 (2003), 1030.

[48] For a full account of the reproaches against Origen in the first controversy about Origen at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century see G. Röwekamp, *Einleitung*, in: Pamphilus von Caesaerea, *Apologia pro Origene. Apologie für Origenes*, FC 80, Turnhout 2005, 9-217 (34-44).

[49] See R. Amacker / E. Junod, *L'art d'entrer en matière dans une literature de controverse: les premières pages de l'apologie pour Origène de Pamphile*, in: J.-D. Duboisn / B. Rousel (eds.), *Entrer en matière*, Paris 1998, 37-51.

[50] This is proposed by Röwekamp, 2005, 57f., referring to R. Amacker / E. Junod, *Étude*, in: R. Amacker / E. Junod (eds.), Pamphilus, *Apologie pour Origène*, SC 464.465, Paris 2002, 81-85.

[51] Pamph., apol. Orig. 18-20.

contemporary and intellectual environment of those around Eusebius.[52] He could develop his thought allowing a rhetorical change from probation (of Origen) to refutation (of the accusers) within his treatise.[53] He could employ classic apologetic *topoi* such as Origen's good moral conduct as proof of truthfulness, and the ignorance and hard-heartedness of his opponents as proof of their intellectual and moral deficits. Éric Junod and René Amacker haven given an instructive account of the apologetic character of the *Apologia pro Origene* in the introduction to their edition in the *Sources chrétiennes* series.[54] Making use of the genre of apologetics and its well-established traditions was obviously the best possible method to achieve the desired aim, namely to prove someone's orthodoxy. When the orthodoxy of theologians or of particular styles of theological thinking came under severe suspicion, the genre of apologetics found a new *Sitz im Leben*. This is a phenomenon for which we can take the *Apologia pro Origene* as an instructive example. We do not know how successful Pamphilus' apology was, nor do we know the result of that first controversy over Origen. It may well be that Pamphilus was partly successful in defending Origen against some of the accusations. It is also clear that the criticism of Origen did not stop entirely after the *Apologia pro Origene* was published.[55] However, it is (ironically) the fate of orthodoxy that it always needs to be defined anew. And what may have helped to defend Origen in the beginning of the fourth century turned out to become one of the major problems of his reception after the Arian controversy, because Pamphilus' efforts may have involuntarily contributed to misrepresenting him as an *Arius ante Arium* after the battle for the orthodox understanding of the trinity had finally been resolved.[56] It is a bit of an

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[52] Cf. Eus., p.e. and d.e. and also of course the *historia ecclesiastica*. It is tempting to assume that it was Eusebius who supplied Pamphilus with the quotations from the writings of Origen.

[53] See Röwekamp, 2005, 81.

[54] See Amacker / Junod, 2002, 81-101.

[55] That the controversies about Origen's theology did not come to an end after Pamphilus' apology can be concluded from a text like Eustathius' engast. 3; 14; 17; 21.

[56] As a matter of fact, at the end of the fourth century Rufinus had to defend Origen against the reproach of being a trinitarian pluralist, a subordinatianist, and an Arian.

irony in the history of Christian *apologiae ecclesiasticae* that the first literary example of this genre made it necessary that nearly a hundred years later other apologies for the same person - Origen - had to be written: by the late fourth century some of the passages that Pamphilus had extracted from *De principiis* in apologetic intention were anything but orthodox.[57]

Just as we have said that Origen was of particular interest for our question of apologetics and orthodoxy, because in his works all the possible aspects of apologetics and orthodoxy come together, the same is certainly true of Athanasius.[58] In his early years, Athanasius came to the fore with an eminent apologetic summa in his double work *Contra gentes / De incarnatione*[59] that resembles the twofold apologetic summa by Eusebius of Caesarea in many respects. In this work Athanasius presents a Christology that clearly rejects pagan criticism of Christ from people like Porphyrius, but also refutes the defrayal of Christ's godliness by the Arians. Once again we can see here that there is a tendency in apologetics to distinguish ortho-

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There is some irony in the development of Christian orthodoxy in view of Origen's heritage, because Rufinus in his apology for Origen did actually not have to defend Origen, but rather the interpretation of Origen in Pamphilus' *Apologia pro Origene*. To put it the other way round: Many of the suspicions against Origen in the Arian controversy can be explained by the fact that Pamphilus, in his attempt at defending Origen against some Trinitarian pluralists before the time of the Arian controversy, had produced an interpretation of Origen's doctrine of God that necessarily became problematic as soon as Arius had put up a doctrine that seemed like an extreme Origenism in the other (subordinatian) direction. Pamphilus may unintentionally have contributed to later accusations against, and condemnations of, Origen; the final one was set up in Constantinople in 553. This idea is brilliantly developed by Williams, 1993, 151-169.

[57] See Williams, 1993, 151-169.

[58] On Athanasius see M. Tetz, *Athanasius von Alexandrien*, in: TRE 4 (1979), 333-349; U. Heil, *Athanasius von Alexandrien*, in: ^{3}LACL (2002), 69-76.

[59] On the apologetic double work see U. Heil, *Athanasius als Apologet des Christentums. Einleitungsfragen zum Doppelwerk Contra gentes / De incarnatione*, in: A.-C. Jacobsen / J. Ulrich (eds.), *Three Greek Apologists. Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius. Drei griechische Apologeten. Origenes, Eusebius und Athanasius*, ECCA 3, Frankfurt 2007, 159-187, and E.P. Meijering, *Struktur und Zusammenhang des apologetischen Werkes von Athanasius*, in: VigChr 48 (1994), 135-156; 50 (1996), 364-368.

doxy from heresy. Aside from *Contra gentes / De incarnatione*, there are other extant texts from Athanasius that belong to the genre of *apologiae ecclesiasticae*. As we know from Athanasius' career with its many ups and downs, there were stages in the course of the Arian controversy when his loyalty to the emperor, the correctness of his administration and - last but not least - his orthodoxy underwent some severe questioning, with the result that he was sent into exile not less than five times in his life.

In view of this very special biography it is not all that astonishing that he who was familiar with apologetics as a literary presentation of Christianity as a matter of course discovered the genre of apologetics for himself and for his own case. It is Athanasius who wrote the first Christian 'Auto-Apologies' in order to refute all the different accusations brought up against him. In these apologies he defended himself, endeavouring to strengthen his position, proving his innocence and orthodoxy. With this object, he produced not less than four major texts, namely the *Apologia secunda contra Arianos* and - closely related to it - *the Historia Arianorum*, and moreover both the *Apologia ad Constantium* and the *Apologia de fuga sua.*[60]

The *Apologia secunda contra Arianos* was not written off the cuff, but evolved during a longer period, being continually amended by the addition of historical accounts and documents. The documents play an important role in the apologetic strategy. They serve to make the apology appear particularly objective: the readers are invited to

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[60] The edition of these *Apologiae* is in progress. Hanns Christof Brennecke, Uta Heil and Annette von Stockhausen have recently published *Athanasius Werke II. Die "Apologien", 8. Lieferung*, Berlin 2006, including a new edition of the *Apologia ad Constantium*, 279-309. For the other apologies see H.G. Opitz (ed.), *Athanasius Werke II*, Berlin 1941, 68-86 (*Apologia de fuga sua*); 87-168 (*Apologia secunda*); 183-230 (*Historia Arianorum*). For these editions the praefatio by Brennecke / Heil / von Stockhausen must be compared. For the *Apologia secunda* see L.W. Barnard, *Studies in Athanasius' Apologia secunda*, Bern 1992. For the *Apologia de fuga sua* see A.L. Pettersen, *"To Flee or Not to Flee" (Athan., fug.)*, in: W.J. Sheils (ed.), *Persecution and Toleration. Papers read at the 22nd summer meeting and the 23rd winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, Oxford 1984, 29-42. For the *Apologia ad Constantium* see the introduction and notes in J.-M. Szymusiak (ed.), Athanase d'Alexandrie, *Deux apologies. Apologie à l'Empereur Constance. Apologie pour sa fuite*, SC 56, Paris 1958, 9-77 (59-61).

scrutinize everything that the author asserts by taking note of the 'original' documents from the controversies. This technique resembles Eusebius' method in the *historia ecclesiastica* as well as in the *praeparatio evangelica*. The different stages of editing may possibly be interpreted as prearrangements for the actual cases when defending himself, before being sent into exile.[61] Closely related to the *Apologia secunda contra Arianos* is the *Historia Arianorum* where Athanasius gives an account of the history of his persecution by the 'Arian'[62] enemies, including a severe criticism of the policy of the emperor Constantius II.[63] For apologetic reasons the *Historia Arianorum* sketches an image of the author as an innocent victim of 'Arian' aggression and imperial arbitrariness. In their close links, both texts serve to prove Athansius' orthodoxy as distinguished from the 'Arian' heresy.

The last texts I want to mention are the *Apologia ad Constantium* and the *Apologia de fuga sua*. They differ from the former two inasmuch they do not primarily deal with theological questions, but with the detailed reproaches that led to Athanasius' exile in 356.[64] Although probably never dispatched, the *Apologia ad Constantium* is addressed directly to the emperor whom it aims to convince of the author's innocence. In detail, Athanasius denies: 1. having instigated the conflict of the two brothers Constans and Constantius, 2. having been involved with the rebel Magnentius, and 3. having refused to appear at the emperor's residence although having been prompted to do so. It is easy to appreciate that he has to defend himself against an accusation of high treason here. He proclaims

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[61] Heil, 2002, 71.

[62] The term 'Arian' is used in a polemic way by Athanasius. It may target Eusebians in the 340s and Homoeans in the 350s. Historically, there were hardly any Arians left in the time after Nicea 325, when Arius' theology was condemned. Athanasius uses the word 'Arians' in order to label his opponents as heretics - and to confirm that he himself is orthodox.

[63] For all the problems connected with the question of the opposition of bishops against the emperor Constantius II in the 350s see H.C. Brennecke, *Hilarius von Portiers und die Bischofsopposition gegen Konstantius II. Untersuchungen zur dritten Phase des arianischen Streits*, PTS 26, Berlin 1984.

[64] On the council of Milan that condemned Athanasius in 355 see Brennecke, 1984, 147-195.

his innocence and disclaims the authenticity of a number of letters and documents that seem to testify against him. Very similar is the *Apologia de fuga sua* where he tries to explain and to justify his flight from Alexandria in early 356 after his condemnation in Milan. Here, the apologetic aim is to avoid any negative reputation in his home dioceses Alexandria and in Egypt. However, in both of the latter texts Athanasius defends himself against particular reproaches concerning his political and personal conduct rather than adducing evidence for his orthodoxy as is the case in the first two treatises.

3. Conclusion

We can break off our short review of some selected sources here. Are apologists orthodox? I think they are, or rather: I think they think they are. Yes, they are orthodox in the sense that their apologetic task necessarily implies a self-definition of Christianity which involves demarcating limits with regard to other forms of Christianity, regardless of whether these other forms are already institutionally established (e.g. other churches), or whether they 'only' diverge considerably from what the apologists consider to be true Christian doctrine or practice. When apologists defend and promote Christianity they defend and promote the view and understanding of Christianity which they regard as orthodox. In doing so, they both presuppose and simultaneously create orthodoxy. They distinguish good Christians from bad, pious people from pretenders, orthodox from heretic. They have a particular interest in establishing a clear and unified picture of true Christianity, especially because, as we have seen, they argue with the motive of coherence and contradiction, presupposing that a contradictory philosophy must be wrong and a coherent philosophy must be right. Elaborating on this, Christian apologists are forced to reject all other forms of Christianity apart from their own, and they thus contribute to the picture of a unified orthodox Christianity and Church. For the Aarhus project this means that it seems very sensible to go on to the themes of *norms* and *normativity* after having dealt with apologetics for several years now.

Are orthodox theologians apologetic? I am sure they are. They are apologetic in the sense that the idea of orthodoxy always implies a strict claim to truth not only compared to other religions,

but also compared to other forms or understandings of Christianity. This particular claim to truth must be continually defended. In order to do so, orthodoxy employs the complete range of literary options from apologies in a narrower sense of the genre to apologetic elements and motives in many other literary forms and genres such as histories, commentaries, and so forth.[65] Orthodoxy necessarily needs to cope with the art of apologetic argument in order to maintain its claim to truth against others. If this is correct, and there seems to be little reason to doubt it, we can easily predict that when the Aarhus project turns to the questions of *norms* and *normativity* in the years to come, the issue of apologetics will remain a constant companion on the way. And many of the insights about apologetics that we have won in the last few years will help us to a better understanding of why and how norms succeeded in establishing themselves in antiquity and in early Christianity.

[65] For a fresh theoretical approach to the problem of apologetics and literary genre, see A. Klostergaard Petersen's essay (in this volume).

For the Sake of a 'Rational Worship': The Issue of Prayer and Cult in Early Christian Apologetics

Lorenzo Perrone

"Eine Säkularisierung, die nicht vernichtet, vollzieht sich im Modus der Übersetzung"

Jürgen Habermas

1. By Way of Introduction: An Embarrassing Question

Dealing with early Christian apologetics generally implies some uneasiness, if one is aiming for greater insight into the religious experience of Christian communities at that time. Starting with Franz Overbeck's famous characterization of these writings as the first expression of ancient Christian literature, though dressed in profane forms for a profane public, we are led to regard apologetic literature as a kind of *Mischwesen*.[1] It is not simply a question of literary genre - whose problematic unity, according to Jean-Claude Fredouille, can at best be conceived of only in a 'polymorphic' form - but rather of the 'thing' itself, I mean the apologetic discourse as such.[2]

There is a seemingly unavoidable limitation in it, insofar as the act of presenting reasons for faith (1Petr 3:15) in response to accusa-

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[1] F. Overbeck, *Über die Anfänge der patristischen Literatur*, in: HZ 48 (1882), 412-472, repr. Darmstadt 1964.

[2] J.-C. Fredouille, *L'apologétique chrétienne antique. Naissance d'un genre littéraire*, in: REAug 38 (1992), 219-234; id., *L'apologétique chrétienne antique. Métamorphoses d'un genre polymorphe*, in: REAug 41 (1995), 201-216; cf. also A. Cameron, *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. A Genre of Intolerance?*, in: J.-M. Carriez / R. Lizzi Testa (eds.), *"Humana sapit". Études d'antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini*, Turnhout 2002, 219-227.

tions and criticisms - as is normally assumed - in principle demands to adopt a level of discourse understandable to the 'other'. In other words, a 'language of translation' is needed, when the apologists address their pagan counterparts, in order not only to reject their charges, but also to introduce their addressees to their own beliefs and customs in some way. Yet in doing this, as with every translation, we may ask ourselves if something gets lost. It is not my intention to revisit an older dispute, which essentially turned on the relationship between Christianity and philosophy, apologetics being negatively regarded as a form of the latter and as such opposed to the former, to be conceived of in its genuine core as a biblical and historical faith.[3] On the contrary, I recognise that this provocative approach cannot entirely convince, because of its schematic onesidedness. Nevertheless, when preparing this paper I have often caught myself wondering whether there may indeed be something in it.

At any rate, I had to reckon again with a reasonable 'commonplace', a shared presupposition of scholarship, which invites us to distinguish the normal content of apologetic discourse, constitutively submitted to a restriction of speech, from the 'positive' witness and argument of Christian experience and theology.[4] This distinction, which is undoubtedly supported by several witnesses of

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[3] On this debate see recently S.-P. Bergjan, *Der fürsorgende Gott. Der Begriff der PRONOIA Gottes in der apologetischen Literatur der Alten Kirche*, AKG 81, Berlin 2002, (83-106). Discussion here focuses first of all on H. Dörrie, *Die Andere Theologie. Wie stellten die frühchristlichen Theologen des 2.-4. Jahrhunderts ihren Lesern die "griechische Weisheit" (= den Platonismus) dar?*, in: ThPh 56 (1981), 1-46.

[4] I paid myself a programmatic homage to this presupposition in my article on Origen as apologist: L. Perrone, *Fra silenzio e parola. Dall'apologia alla testimonianza del cristianesimo nel* Contro Celso *di Origene*, in: A. Wlosok / F. Paschoud (eds.), *L'apologétique chrétienne gréco-latine à l'époque prénicénienne. Sept exposés suivis de discussions*, EnAC 51, Genève 2005, 103-141. As lately stated by Sébastien Morlet in his excellent dissertation, "aux païens, il faut parler le langage des païens" (S. Morlet, *L'apologétique chrétienne à l'époque de Constantin. La Démonstration Évangélique d'Eusèbe de Césarée*, Diss. Université Paris IV - Sorbonne, Paris 2006, 327); on the other hand, he stresses the fact that in Eusebius' apologetics "l'exégèse et la théologie, traditionnellement bannies de la polémique antipaïenne, acquièrent droit de cité" (ibid.).

the apologetic literature, may not be valid in every case.[5] From the perspective of its historical evolution, there is no lack of exceptions; these were not unknown to antiquity itself, if Lactantius felt it necessary to criticise Cyprian's *Ad Demetrianum*, because he had had recourse to the Bible in a work addressed to a pagan: according to him, instead of rational arguments, the bishop of Carthage supported his plea with the 'mysteries' reserved to the faithful.[6] Yet the Bible itself could not be eschewed, both positively and negatively, as we can see in such different works as Justin's *Apologies* and Origen's *Contra Celsum*.[7] As shown by the Alexandrian's response to Celsus'

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[5] According to M. Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum. Die Kontroverse um den christlichen Wahrheitsanspruch in den ersten Jahrhunderten*, Paderborn ²2001, 68, we should recognise that beside the philosophical effort to defend the pretention of truth in face of reason, in some instances the Christian religion is approached as a 'mystery' demanding grace and faith. He particularly points to Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian and *Ad Diognetum*. Without evoking an *arcani disciplina*, one may refer to the attitude recommended by the Gospel (Mt 7:6) and recalled thus by Cyprian: *sanctum quoque iubeamur intra conscientiam nostram tenere nec inculcandum porcis et canibus exponere*. Cyp., Demetr. 1.1 (J.-C. Fredouille [ed.], SC 467, Paris 2003, 70, 9-11).

[6] Lact., inst. 5.1,26: (Cyprian) *placere [...] sacramentum ignorantibus non potest, quoniam mystica sunt quae locutus est, et ad id praeparata ut a solis fidelibus audiantur* (P. Monat [ed.], SC 204, Paris 1973, 132); 5.4,4: *non enim scripturae testimoniis, quam ille* (i.e. Demetrianus) *utique vanam, fictam, commenticiam putabat, sed argumentis et ratione fuerat refellendus* (ibid., 148). See Fredouille's remarks on this point in: Cyprien de Carthage, *À Démétrien*, J.-C. Fredouille (ed.), SC 467, Paris 2003, 38-48; and id., *L'apologétique latine pré-constantinienne (Tertullien, Minucius Felix, Cyprien). Essai de typologie*, in: *L'apologétique chrétienne gréco-latine à l'époque prénicénienne*, 2005, 50-53.

[7] One can also mention Arist., apol. 16.6, inviting the Emperor to read the 'writings' of the Christians: Καὶ ἵνα γνῷς, ὦ βασιλεῦ, ὅτι οὐκ ἀπ᾽ ἐμαυτοῦ ταῦτα λέγω, ταῖς γραφαῖς ἐγκύψας τῶν Χριστιανῶν εὑρήσεις οὐδέν ἔξωθεν τῆς ἀληθείας με λέγειν (C. Alpigiano (ed.), Firenze 1988, 124); or the analogous passage in Athenag., leg. 9.1: νομίζω δὲ καὶ ὑμᾶς φιλομαθεστάτους καὶ ἐπιστημονεστάτους ὄντας οὐκ ἀνοήτους γεγονέναι οὔτε τῶν Μωσέως οὔτε τῶν Ἡσαΐου καὶ Ἱερεμίου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν προφητῶν, οἳ κατ᾽ ἔκστασιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς λογισμῶν, κινήσαντος αὐτοὺς τοῦ θείου πνεύματος, ἃ ἐνηργοῦντο ἐξεφώνησαν (B. Pouderon (ed.), SC 379, Paris 1992, 98,4-8). For Tatian, see below no. 62.

Alethès Logos, the pagan critics themselves from a certain moment onwards included it in the debate. Finally, for Porphyry and Julian, as is well known, the Christian Scriptures even became a major field of polemics, and so later, starting with Eusebius, apologetics had to assume them organically into its accounts of Christianity.[8]

Despite these and other reservations that we could adduce so as to lessen the above mentioned distinction between mere 'apology' and positive 'testimony', the apologetic writings of the second and third centuries as a matter of fact provide us with surprisingly few materials on Christian prayer and cult. Was this then a topic which necessarily required 'outsiders' to be excluded from and to be reserved instead only to 'insiders', as the more frequently held opinion would have it? For several reasons, which I would here like to explore, things do not appear so clear-cut. On the one hand, taking into account the general context of the debate, prayer and cult deserve to be appreciated as one of the major themes in the pagan critique of Christianity; on the other hand, though rather exceptionally, there is some evidence in important apologetic writings offering us glimpses of the Christian forms of worship. These few instances are first of all the *First Apology* of Justin and the *Apologeticum* of Tertullian. How is such a disproportion to be explained then, without resorting just to the individual profile of their respective authors? Furthermore, the apologists did not abstain in their turn from attacking the cultic expressions of the pagan world. Was this also a means for presenting their own forms of piety, though implicitly and indirectly, as the alternative to pagan worship? Lastly, when the topic is expressly mentioned in apologetic discourse, what forms and content does it imply? In what follows I shall try to deal with this series of problems, as will be clear, in a rather tentative manner, both because of their general relevance, and because they need further investigation.

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[8] See J.G. Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, STAC 3, Tübingen 2000; id., *The Interpretation of the Old Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism*, STAC 23, Tübingen 2004.

2. A Constant Critique: the Christian 'Apostasy' from Traditional Rites

To begin with we may generalise what has been observed with regard to the masterpiece of antenicene apologetics, Origen's *Contra Celsum*. For Guy Stroumsa, the belated reply of the famous Alexandrian theologian to the unknown pagan philosopher of the second century is an example of what should be called a 'dialogue of the deaf'.[9] This paradoxical remark comes immediately to mind, if we recall the fact that the pagan attacks, among several other motifs of criticisms, were especially drawn to the attitude of rejection Christians manifested towards the traditional cults, both Jewish and pagan, including of course the worship due to the Emperor.[10] At the beginning of the fourth century, introducing his apologetic *summa* - the great *Doppelwerk* of the *Praeparatio* and *Demonstratio Evangelica* - Eusebius once again sums up what until then had been one of the main accusations in the eyes of pagan critics:

> What pardon will deserve those who turned from the divinities ever recognised by Greeks and barbarians, kings, legislators and philosophers as well, in the cities and in the countryside, through every kind of cult, initiation and mystery, and have chosen what is impious and godless among men?[11]

This passage, reformulating charges previously put forward, among others, by Celsus and Porphyry, eloquently shows to what extent

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[9] G.G. Stroumsa, *Celsus, Origen and the Nature of Religion*, in: L. Perrone (ed.), *Discorsi di verità. Paganesimo, giudaismo e cristianesimo a confronto nel Contro Celso di Origene*, SEAug 61, Roma 1998, 81-94, repr. in id., *Barbarian Philosophy. The Religious Revolution of Early Christianity*, WUNT 112, Tübingen 1999, 44-56.

[10] Tert., apol. 10.1: *Deos, inquitis, non colitis, et pro imperatoribus sacrificia non penditis* (E. Dekkers [ed.], CChr.SL 1, Turnhout 1954, 105,1-2).

[11] Eus., p.e. 1.2,3: Ποίας δὲ καταξιωθήσεσθαι συγγνώμης τοὺς τοὺς ἐξ αἰῶνος μὲν παρὰ πᾶσιν Ἕλλησι καὶ βαρβάροις κατά τε πόλεις καὶ ἀγροὺς παντοίοις ἱεροῖς καὶ τελεταῖς καὶ μυστηρίοις πρὸς ἁπάντων ὁμοῦ βασιλέων τε καὶ νομοθετῶν καὶ φιλοσόφων θεολογουμένους ἀποστραφέντας, ἑλομένους δὲ τὰ ἀσεβῆ καὶ ἄθεα τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις [...]. (J. Sirinelli / É. des Places [eds.], SC 206, Paris 1974, 106).

the issue of prayer and cult weighed in the debate: in this respect, the Christians' fault practically culminated in an unprecedented 'apostasy' from the traditional rites.[12]

This aspect did not go unnoticed to the earliest observers of the new religion, as we can see in Pliny's letter to Emperor Trajan,[13] a document which already outlines the essential terms of the clash brought about in the religious and political system of the Roman state by the adherents of a novel *superstitio* with its own distinctive cult:[14] on the one hand, the repressive reaction to it by imperial authority demands the performance of traditional worship of the gods and the emperor;[15] on the other hand, the suspect practice of Christians is introduced in Pliny's report in the light of a cultic moment: the usual assembly of the faithful, on a fixed day, before sunrise, during which the community sings hymns to Christ 'as their god' and commits itself to a covenant of virtuous life. Not content with this hint at a customary rite, the Roman governor of Bithynia further mentioned an 'ordinary and innocent' meal.[16] Despite its problematic sources of information, Pliny's letter is certainly more

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[12] In Tertullian's words, *diuortium ab institutis maiorum*. Tert., nat. 1.10,3 (J.G.P. Borleffs [ed.], CChr.SL 1, Turnhout 1954, 24,16f.).

[13] Plin., ep. 10.96. On this source, see *I pagani di fronte al cristianesimo. Testimonianze dei secoli I e II*, BPat 2, P. Carrara (ed.), Firenze 1984, (54-59). Cf. also R.L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, New Haven 1984, ²2003, 1-30 and K. Thraede, *Noch einmal. Plinius d. J. und die Christen*, in: ZNW 95 (2004), 102-128.

[14] As stated by Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 35, *superstitio* as opposed to *religio* meant "ein Konglomerat fragwürdiger Vorstellungen und Praktiken, in dem sich Aberglaube, Magie, geheime Zusammenkünfte, unrömische Gesinnung und konspirative Absichten vermischten".

[15] Plin., ep. 10.96,5: *Qui negabant esse se Christianos aut fuisse, cum praeeunte me deos appellarent, et imagini tuae, quam propter hoc iusseram cum simulacris numinum adferri, ture ac vino supplicarent, praeterea maledicerent Christo, quorum nihil cogi posse dicuntur, qui sunt re vera Christiani, dimittendos esse putavi* (M. Schuster / R. Hanslik [eds.], Leipzig 1958, 355, 27-356, 4).

[16] Plin., ep. 10.96,7: *Adfirmabant autem hanc fuisse summam vel culpae suae vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent. Quibus pe-*

than a confused and caricatural *graffito*, and its weight in the tiny amount of evidence for the ritual performances of early Christianity is proportionately great.[17] The document does not even openly betray a concern for refashioning the evidence upon which it relies through pagan categories, even if scholars have sometimes insisted on the idea that Pliny must have perceived the Christian rites as a form of the officially banned bacchanals.[18] Moreover, when comparing these statements with evidence from early Christian apologetics, we find that Pliny subordinates information on the Christian ethos to his report on their ritual activities, while the apologists, first and foremost if not exclusively, tend to stress the aspects of morality in their co-religionists. Instead of pleading for a new 'piety', one would say that they especially invest in the new quality of the Christian 'way of life' as an apologetic argument. Whereas the primacy of rite which surfaces in Pliny's letter is a clear hint at the importance of this aspect within Roman religion, since it is precisely a religion consisting of a social dimension and cultic acts.[19]

(New) 'morality' *versus* (traditional) 'piety' may thus provide us with a first key to our question, without implying a total misunderstanding or a strange 'deafness' on the part of the defenders of Christianity. This clue perhaps appears even more convincing, if we consider how pagan criticisms developed in the course of their debate with Christianity. If Pliny's letter did not directly

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ractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium (356,11-19).

[17] See recently its exploitation for comparative analysis by H. Löhr, *Studien zum frühchristlichen und frühjüdischen Gebet. Eine Untersuchung zu 1 Clem 59 bis 61*, WUNT 160, Tübingen 2003, 424-427.

[18] Wilken, ²2003, 17.

[19] According to the characterization proposed by J. Scheid, *Religion et piété à Rome*, Paris 2001, 24: "Deux traits peuvent définir la religion romaine (ou plus généralement gréco-romaine): c'est une religion sociale et c'est une religion d'actes cultuels. Religion sociale, elle est pratiquée par l'homme en tant que membre d'une communauté et non comme individu subjectif, comme personne; elle est au plus haut degré une religion de participation et elle n'est que cela. Le lieu où s'exerce la vie religieuse de l'homme romain, c'est la famille, l'association professionnelle ou cultuelle, et avant tout la communauté politique".

give much room to crude prejudice and blind attacks over the supposed crimes (*flagitia*) of Christians, these were widespread among both the unliterate and the literate. While 'atheism' can be taken as a common negative label in view of the religious beliefs of Christians and their consequent ritual apostasy from the *cultus deorum*, other accusations point once again to a cultic realm, although in a distorted way. Towards the middle of the second century Marcus Cornelius Fronto, tutor of Marcus Aurelius, collects a whole series of these slanders in a public speech perhaps held before the Roman senate and afterwards reported by Minucius Felix in his dialogue *Octavius*.[20] Its chief accusations against the Christians can be summed up, for our purpose, under the polemical binomial heading 'impiety and immorality'. For Fronto the cultic actions of this new superstition are held to be the source and the means for licentious behaviour: nocturnal meetings, periodical fasting and unworthy food offer Christians in reality the welcome occasion for a criminal sacrilege[21] and sexual excess.[22] Fronto's tirade does not hesitate to report the most disparate and trivial rumours on the absurd and immoral forms of Christian worship, according to which they are said to adore a donkey's head if not the genitals of their high priest, or they would even sacrifice a baby and partake of it during their initiation of new members and *dulcis in fundo* transform their banquets into unrestrained orgies.[23] In the rhetorical *crescendo* of Fronto

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[20] Minuc., Oct. 8.3-5; C. Bammel, *Die erste lateinische Rede gegen die Christen*, in: ZKG 104 (1993), 295-311.

[21] Minuc., Oct. 8.3: *Qui de ultima faece conlectis inperitioribus et mulieribus credulis sexus sui facilitate labentibus plebem profanae coniurationis instituunt; quae nocturnis congregationibus et ieiuniis sollemnibus et inhumanis cibis non sacro quodam, sed piaculo foederantur* (M. Pellegrino / P. Siniscalco / M. Rizzi [eds.], CP 8, Torino 2000, 124, 18-22).

[22] Minuc., Oct. 9.2: *Occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt et amant mutuo paene antequam noverint: passim etiam inter eos veluti quaedam libidinum religio miscetur ac se promisce appellant fratres et sorores, ut etiam non insolens stuprum intercessione sacri nominis fiat incestum* (126, 4-9).

[23] Minuc., Oct. 9.3f.: *Audio eos turpissimae pecudis caput asini consecratum inepta nescio qua persuasione venerari: digna et nata religio talibus moribus! Alii eos ferunt et ipsius antistitis et sacerdotis colere genitalia et quasi parentis sui adorare naturam: nescio an falsa, certe*

a sinister sounding remark also points to the death penalty of the cross as an appropriate 'altar' for such criminals, insofar as Christians venerate what they should themselves deserve.[24] The burden of stereotypes, already partially applied to the Jews, in every one of the instances mentioned by Fronto connects ritual performance with illicit conduct. To assume that for Fronto we have to do with a relation of cause and effect seems to be more than reasonable, and this fact alone once again stresses how the cultic moments may have affected the view pagans had of Christians.

Yet it would be unfair to Fronto to consider his attack only as the negative reflex of an attachment to traditional religion. It is true that he is led to criticize the Christians over against the background of Roman public religion, and perhaps through the eyes of illustrious predecessors,[25] but this polemical approach also enables him to touch on a point about which apologetic discourse was especially sensitive. He in fact condemns the secrecy which in his eyes characterizes the religious expressions of the Christian 'sect', this being a clear hint at actions which should be condemned and persecuted.

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occultis ac nocturnis sacris adposita suspicio (126, 12-128, 17). For the ritual murder see ibid., 9.5f., with the final remark: *haec sacra sacrilegia omnibus taetriora* (128, 28f.).

[24] Minuc., Oct. 9.4: *Et qui hominem summo supplicio pro facinore punitum et crucis ligna feralia eorum caerimonias fabulatur, congruentia perditis sceleratisque tribuit altaria, ut id colant quod merentur* (128, 17-20).

[25] "Non è da escludere, conoscendo il gusto libresco e arcaista del Nostro, che egli sia stato indotto a modellare il proprio intervento sul precedente più illustre e in certo modo paradigmatico di casi del genere, l'orazione che Livio, XXXIX 15 sg., fa pronunciare a Spurio Postumio in occasione dei fatti dei Baccanali del 186 a.C. o addirittura sulla catoniana *De coniuratione* modello probabile di Livio", Carrara, 1984, 88; cf. also Bammel, 1993, 304f. For A.R. Birley, *Attitudes to the State in the Latin Apologists*, in: *L'apologétique chrétienne gréco-latine à l'époque prénicénienne*, 261, "Fronto was no doubt not the first to produce these charges - the *flagitia*, known to Pliny and Tacitus - but he may have been the first to give to the alleged Christian practices the learned label 'Thyestean feasts and Oedipodean intercourse', and this no doubt gave the supposed *flagitia* wider currency". For further analysis of the pagan polemics, as attested by Fronto, see A. Henrichs, *Pagan Ritual and the Alleged Crimes of Early Christians. A Reconsideration*, in: P. Granfield / J.A. Jungmann (eds.), *Kyriakon*. FS J. Quasten, Münster 1970, 18-35.

The opposition of Christianity to Roman religion would seemingly reach its zenith when Fronto wonders why Christians do not possess public altars, temples and statues, while they incredibly claim that their god is always present in everyone, in their thoughts and deeds.[26] In the name of the public religion of Rome Fronto here evokes a line of argument which apologetic discourse was indeed particularly fond of, against both Jews and pagans with their alleged 'exterior' ritualism. At the same time the image of a Christian religion devoid of the constituent elements of a public and observable cult points to the perspective of an interior religion philosophically grounded. We find the same contrast summarized in the dispute between Celsus and Origen, the first practically retelling Fronto's accusation and the second responding to him in the name of a spiritualised religion.[27] On the other hand, precisely through the vindication of an inner religion, we again meet the emphasis on morality, according to the apologetic line of argument mentioned above.

It is not necessary to insist on this point, unless to further mention that the Christian rejection of traditional cults was seen also as the cause of the misfortunes of the Empire, as shown in early apologetics, for instance, by the charges to which Cyprian had to reply in his

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[26] Minuc., Oct. 10.2; 10.5: *Cur etenim occultare et abscondere quicquid illud colunt magnopere nituntur, cum honesta semper publico gaudeant, scelera secreta sint? cur nullas aras habent, templa nulla, nulla nota simulacra, numquam palam loqui, numquam libere congregari, nisi illud quod volunt et interprimunt, aut puniendum est aut pudendum? [...]. At etiam Christiani quanta monstra, quae portenta confingunt! Deum illum suum, quem nec ostendere possunt nec videre, in omnium mores, actus omnium, verba denique et occultas cogitationes diligenter inquirere, discurrentem scilicet atque ubique praesentem; molestum illum volunt, inquietum, impudenter etiam curiosum, siquidem adstat factis omnibus, locis omnibus intererrat, cum nec singulis inservire possit per universa districtus nec universis sufficere in singulis occupatus* (130, 3-24). On the Christian life to be regarded as constantly set under the eye of God see, for example, Athenag., leg. 31.4.

[27] Or., Cels. 8.17: Μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ ὁ Κέλσος φήσιν ἡμᾶς βομοὺς καὶ ἀγάλματα καὶ νεὼς ἱδρύεσθαι φεύγειν, ἐπεὶ τὸ πιστὸν ἡμῖν ἀφανοῦς καὶ ἀποῤῥήτου κοινωνίας οἴεται εἶναι σύνθημα (P. Koetschau (ed.), GCS 3, Leipzig 1899, 234, 15-17). See also ibid. 7.62 and Lona's comments on both passages in: *Die »Wahre Lehre« des Kelsos*, übs. u. erkl. von H.E. Lona, KfA.E 1, Freiburg 2005, 424-427. 436-450.

Ad Demetrianum.[28] As is well known, this line of argument - closely connecting the success of Roman politics with respect for traditional religion, and attested to since Tertullian's *Apologeticum* - never disappeared among pagans; it re-emerged in the debate at the time of Symmachus and Ambrose, and later on in Augustine's *De civitate Dei.*[29] Yet the issue of Christian 'apostasy' now and again surfaces as a constitutive element of pagan criticisms, and the apologists repeatedly acknowledge this fact. It is for this reason that they are obliged to deny both the ἀθεότης, 'irreligiosity' or 'atheism', and the ἀσέβεια, i.e. the 'impiety' the pagan counterpart reproaches them with. But as we observed before and shall be seeing later on, they mostly do not enter into matters of cult and prayer in their own religious tradition, preferring to elaborate on the profession of monotheism and the observance of a high morality as the main body of their defence. On the contrary, the pagan forms of worship become a target for the apologists, who in their turn seem to betray the same reflexes operating in their adversaries by similarly associating in an inverted perspective 'impiety' and 'immorality'. Their polemical reply at the same level of discourse may thus be taken as a second answer to our initial problem: the critique of pagan forms of worship indirectly betrays the conceptions and experiences of Christians within the cultic realm.

3. The Apologetic Rejection of Pagan Cults

The foundation for the apologetic critique of pagan cults was already laid down in the *Acts of the Apostles* through Paul's speech at Athens (Acts 17:22-31). Though the openness shown here by Luke, more concerned in seeking what was held in common with the religious experience of the Greeks, was not always shared by the apologists of the second and third centuries, in the Athens' speech they found the proclamation of the monotheistic faith to the pagan

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[28] Cyp., Demetr. 3.1: *Dixisti per nos fieri et quod nobis debeant imputari omnia ista quibus nunc mundus quatitur et urguetur, quod dii vestri a nobis non colantur* (74,1-3). See also 5.1.

[29] See Tert., apol. 25.2: *Romanos pro merito religionis diligentissimae in tantum sublimitatis elatos et impositos, ut orbem occuparint, et adeo deos esse, ut praeter ceteros floreant qui illis officium praeter ceteros faciant* (135,8-10).

world and with it the rejection of the idolatric cult.[30] We may add to this paradigmatic scene other premises from the same book for the apologetic discourse of early Christianity against traditional cults: on the one hand, Stephen's speech - at least as far as the critique of the Temple as a 'place of God' (Acts 7:47-50) is concerned - and on the other hand the words of Barnabas and Paul during their sojourn at Lystra (Acts 14:8-18), preventing a sacrifice in the name of the false gods. As evidenced by the literal and ideal continuity between Stephen's and Paul's speeches, apologetic criticism on ritual matters originally addressed both a 'Jewish' and a 'Greek' audience, as far as in both cases worship was liable to more or less compromise the belief in God's transcendence and / or uniqueness. The first witnesses of Greek apologetic literature - the few fragments of the *Kerygma Petrou* and, on a larger scale, Aristides' *Apology* - elaborate their discourse precisely through a dual, converging line of argument, at the same time aiming in this way to construct the new Christian identity confronting Jews and Greeks.[31] There is of course no need to emphasize to what extent our two earliest apologetic writings in reality depended upon traditional materials of Hellenistic Judaism against paganism, which moreover were to be used also by subsequent authors.[32] This well-known fact again brings out our difficulty when trying to ascertain the distinctive Christian elements of the apologetic discourse on prayer and worship.

In the case of Aristides' *Apology* the relation to the issue of cult would perhaps be more immediate and cogent, if we could locate it with sufficient assurance in the context of Hadrian's sojourn at Athens (124f.), during which the Emperor was initiated into the myster-

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[30] Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 28 sees in the Areopagus speech an anticipation of methods and arguments to be subsequently adopted by the apologists. Cf. also V. Gatti, *Il discorso di Paolo ad Atene*, StBi 60, Brescia 1982 and B. Pouderon, *Les apologistes grecs du IIe siècle*, Paris 2005, 109f.

[31] M. Cambe (ed.), *Kerygma Petri. Textus et commentarius*, CChr.SA 15, Turnhout 2003. For Pouderon, 2005, 112, "le *Kérygme de Pierre* apparaît comme un écrit à usage interne, comme une revendication identitaire face aux adversaire païens et juifs".

[32] M. Alexandre, *Apologétique judéo-hellénistique et premières apologies chrétiennes*, in: B. Pouderon / J. Doré (eds.), *Les apologistes chrétiens et la culture grecque*, ThH 105, Paris 1998, 1-40.

ies of Eleusis.[33] The text itself does not betray any particular concern regarding the mysteric religions, as attested to later on especially by the *Protreptic* of Clement of Alexandria. Nevertheless the apologetic discourse of Aristides, starting from his profession of monotheism, opposes this to the polytheistic religions of Chaldeans, Greeks and Egyptians, whose fault is demonstrated in each instance by the way they perform their worship. Also the Jews are criticised, though to a lesser degree, because of their cultic behaviour. While the Chaldeans are said to operate a deification of the natural 'elements' (τὰ στοιχεῖα), the Greeks in their turn do the same with men and the Egyptians with animals. Traditional criticism of temples and statues of the false gods characterize the description of the Chaldeans' and the Egyptians' religion, but with regard to the Greeks Aristides' attention is attracted by the ethic aspects, so that their idolatric cult is presented first of all in the negative light of unacceptable moral conduct.[34] Clearly, we have here to do with the Christian equivalent of the already mentioned pair 'irreligiosity and immorality', applied by pagans to Christians. In contradistinction to Chaldeans, Greeks and Egyptians, the Jews recognize the unique God and adopt a behaviour which tendentially reflects his benevolence, a rather unusual appreciation in early Christian apologetics. Notwithstanding that - if we can rely on the Syriac recension of the *Apology* - they too have declined from a coherent profession of monotheism because the way they worship (with their observance of sabbath, months, festivals, fast, circumcision and ritual purity) relates their cult to the angels rather than to God.[35]

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[33] For such a chronological assumption see Pouderon, 2005, 122, who rejects the later dating under Antoninus Pius according to the Syriac version: "le plus simple est de s'en remettre à la tradition eusébienne, confortée par le témoignage de l'arménien, situant la rédaction de l'Apologie sous Hadrien - très exactement à l'automne 124, à l'occasion de la célébration des grands mystères, auxquels l'empereur se serait fait initier".

[34] Arist., apol. 11.7: ὅθεν λαμβάνοντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀφορμὴν ἀπο τῶν θεῶν αὐτῶν ἔπραττον πᾶσαν ἀνομίαν καὶ ἀσέβειαν, καταμιαίνοντες γῆν τε καὶ ἀέρα ταῖς μιαραῖς αὐτῶν πράξεσιν (ed. Alpigiano, 98).

[35] See Arist., apol. 14 (Syriac text in: B. Pouderon / M.J. Pierre (eds.), SC 470, Paris 2003, 234). Cf. also *Kerygma Petri*, fr. 4 with the commentary of Cambe on the Jewish

The polemical presentation of the four 'peoples' or 'religions' almost exclusively predominates until the final illustration of the Christian way of life. Occasionally one can observe a hint at the topos we met dealing with the apologetic premises of *Acts*: Aristides initially elaborates on the absolute transcendence of God, observing that "he does not need sacrifice and libation", thus insinuating just *en passant* the end of the regime of sacrifice in Christian worship, a major feature of the new religion in the framework of apologetic discourse.[36] The positive inference is therefore to be sought in the conclusion of this first *Apology*. Anticipating the famous description of *Ad Diognetum*, it gives us an ideal picture of the new 'people' of Christians, who in Aristides' eyes are the only ones to combine recognition of the true God with a corresponding practice. Once again the narrow connection between religion and ethos comes to the fore without a particular emphasis on the aspect of cult as such, but developing instead some interesting aspects of the Christian life of prayer, as we shall see in a later section.

We have already remarked some affinities between Aristides' *Apology* and *Ad Diognetum* with regard to the paradigmatic portrait of Christians. Their convergence in the apologetic agenda can further be shown by the fact that the initial polemics of this so-called 'letter' equally attacks both pagans and Jews, thus placing the two adversaries of Christianity at the same level precisely because of a 'worship' (θρησκεία) to be rejected.[37] While the critique of pagan cult appears to be rather moderate and conventional, briefly building upon the traditional arguments against idols already exploited in Judaeo-hellenistic apologetics, the rejection of the Jewish cult is striking because of its unexpected assimilation to pagan forms of

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θεοσέβεια, 237-255.

[36] Arist., apol. 1.5: οὐ χρῄζει θυσίας καὶ σπονδῆς (56).

[37] See respectively Diogn. 2; 3-4. With E. Norelli, *A Diogneto*, Milano 1991, I date the treatise between the middle of the second century and the beginning of the third. For the analysis of the polemical section, cf. M. Rizzi, *Ideologia e retorica negli «Exordia» apologetici. Il problema dell' "altro"*, SPMed 18, Milano 1993, 65-74. He stresses the similarities of approach to Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum* and Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum*, inasmuch as all these writings actually relate to a pagan partner.

worship under the polemical label of 'superstition' (δεισιδαιμονία).[38] Now, what makes paganism and Judaism similarly objectionable in the eyes of the author is the practice of sacrifice: as the Greeks absurdly offer victims to their insensitive idols, so the Jews commit an even greater 'stupidity' (μωρία) towards the Creator of the universe by sacrificing to him when he does not need anything.[39] The unusual parallelism, rather anachronistic at the time in view of the destruction of the Temple and also embarrassing against the background of the Old Testament ritual norms and customs, is further supplemented by a detailed criticism of Jewish rites.[40] Once more the author opposes the true 'religion' (θεοσέβεια), that is the cult to be paid to God (obviously implying by this its Christian version), to 'superstition' (δεισιδαιμονία) and 'absurdity' (ἀφροσύνη). This harsh attack enlarges the range of subjects coming under criticism that we met before in Aristides' *Apology*, adding the rejection of cir-

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[38] Observe the occurrence of the term θεοσέβεια. Diogn. 1: ὑπερεσπουδακότα σε τὴν θεοσέβειαν τῶν Χριστιανῶν μαθεῖν (H.I. Marrou [ed.], SC 33bis, Paris 1965, 52), lacking in the *Kerygma Petri* and in Aristides' and Justin's *Apologies* as well, to indicate the "religion of the Christians" in contrast with the Jewish religion defined as δεισιδαιμονία (1; 4.1). The cultual vocabulary of the letter is particularly rich: see, e.g., θρησκεία (3.2), θρησκεύω (1; 2.8), λατρεία (3.2), μυστήριον (4.6).

[39] Diogn. 3.3; 3.5: Ἃ γὰρ τοῖς ἀναισθήτοις καὶ κωφοῖς προσφέροντες οἱ Ἕλληνες ἀφροσύνης δεῖγμα παρέχουσι, ταῦθ' οὗτοι, καθάπερ προσδεομένῳ τῷ θεῷ λογιζόμενοι παρέχειν, μωρίαν εἰκὸς μᾶλλον ἡγοῖντ' ἄν, οὐ θεοσέβειαν [...]. Οἱ δέ γε θυσίας αὐτῷ δι' αἵματος καὶ κνίσης καὶ ὁλοκαυτωμάτων ἐπιτελεῖν οἰόμενοι καὶ ταύταις ταῖς τιμαῖς αὐτὸν γεραίρειν, οὐδέν μοι δοκοῦσι διαφέρειν τῶν εἰς τὰ κωφὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ‹ἐνδεικνυμένων› φιλοτιμίαν (58).

[40] There are other, no less strong reservations concerning Judaism: by denying the possibility for men to know God, unless he reveals himself through the venue of his Son, the author of *Ad Diognetum* seems even to deny the biblical revelation in the OT (see Diogn. 8.1: Τίς γὰρ ὅλως ἀνθρώπων ἠπίστατο τί ποτ ἐστὶ Θεός, πρὶν αὐτὸν ἐλθεῖν [70]). There is otherwise, among the ecclesiastical writers of the early centuries, the recognition and polemical exploitation of the destruction of the Temple and the consequent abolition of sacrifice in Judaism (see Just., dial. 40.2; 46.2; Mel. pass., § 43-45; Tert., Iud. 11.11; 13.26; Minuc., Oct. 33.4f.; Or., Cels. 2.8; 4.22). Furthermore Justin reports a discussion among Jews on 'sacrifice' in Jerusalem or in the diaspora, equating it in the second case with prayer (Just., dial. 117.2).

cumcision to the rejection of the norms of purity, Sabbath observance and respect for the phases of the moon.

It is clear that the opening *pars destruens* of the treatise is designed to prepare the positive presentation of the "paradoxical way of life" (παράδοξος πολιτεία) of Christians in its second part.[41] For our purpose it is interesting to observe how a major motif of the critique in Christian apologetics against paganism - the system of sacrifice - is here elaborated especially with regard to Judaism. Provisionally, we can take this indication on the one hand as a sign that, despite the specialization of apologetic discourse in a variety of targets - Jewish, pagan and, we could add, also heretic - there are common traits which contribute to nourish it and are applicable without distinction to the various partners. On the other hand, we are led to think that within the apologetic approach of *Ad Diognetum* the category of 'cult' gains a structural relevance, at least polemically, despite the fact that Christians' celebrated "paradoxical way of life" does not imply any specific characterization of this nature, perhaps as the consequence of the distinction drawn with regard to Jewish 'ritualism'.[42] If this is true, such a disconcerting result, which I shall be commenting upon later, at all events brings to light a major line of argument on cult and prayer, pointing to a dynamic of 'spiritualisation' or 'interiorisation' of religion as typical of Christianity.[43]

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[41] Diogn. 5.4: θαυμαστὴν καὶ ὁμολογουμένως παράδοξον ἐνδείκνυνται τὴν κατάστασιν τῆς ἑαυτῶν πολιτείας (62). On this famous passage see M. Rizzi, *La cittadinanza paradossale dei cristiani (Ad Diognetum 5-6). Le trasformazioni cristiane di un topos retorico*, in: Annali di Scienze Religiose 1 (1996), 221-260.

[42] The structural relevance of the cultic aspects is also suggested by the programmatic statement in Diogn. 4.6: τὸ δὲ τῆς ἰδίας αὐτῶν θεοσεβείας μυστήριον μὴ προσδοκήσῃς δύνασθαι παρὰ ἀνθρώπου μαθεῖν (60).

[43] As announced by the title of the book itself, G.G. Stroumsa, *La fin du sacrifice. Les mutations religieuses de l'Antiquité tardive*, Paris 2005, considers the religious transformation of late antiquity with the creation of two new religions - Christianity and rabbinic Judaism - as a consequence of the end of sacrifice determined by the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Yet this process is not without antecedents, as shown by B. Ego / A. Lange / P. Pilhofer (eds.), *Gemeinde ohne Tempel. Community without Temple. Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und*

With Justin the specialization of early Christian apologetics in two major directions, towards either the Greeks or the Jews, becomes evident. Nevertheless, it is no accident that the author of the *Dialogue with Trypho*, the first known piece of anti-Jewish polemics, fills his *Apologies* addressed to the Emperor and the Senate with prophetic *testimonia* taken from the Scriptures, while viceversa the prologue to the *Dialogue* presents us with the most vivid image of Justin's intellectual profile as a Christian philosopher. We shall not insist here on the way Justin deals with the issue of cult and prayer when debating with the Jew Trypho, even if this would certainly enrich our picture.[44] His criticism of pagan worship, besides the stock elements of anti-idolatric polemics, possesses its own individual emphasis. Justin too shares the critique of pagan sacrifice by recalling anew the idea that the Creator does not need any 'blood, libations or incense'. Yet he goes further by opposing prayer of praise and thanksgiving to sacrifice. He thus practically confers on prayer the status of a substitute for sacrifice more clearly than had been the case among the apologists we have considered so far.[45]

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seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum, WUNT 118, Tübingen 1999.

[44] See, for example, how Justin considers the prescription of sacrifice in the OT legislation as dictated by the sinful behaviour of the Jews (Just., dial. 22.11: οὔτε οὖν θυσίας παρ' ὑμῶν λαμβάνει, οὔτε ὡς ἐνδεὴς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐνετείλατο ποιεῖν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὑμῶν [P. Bobichon (ed.), Par. 47, Fribourg 2003, 240]; cf. also 46.5). Another important feature is the typological interpretation which presents the ritual norms as an anticipation of Christian rites like the Eucharist (Just., dial. 41.1: Καὶ ἡ τῆς σεμιδάλεως δὲ προσφορά, ὦ ἄνδρες, ἔλεγον, ἡ ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαριζομένων ἀπὸ τῆς λέπρας προσφέρεσθαι παραδοθεῖσα, τύπος ἦν τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς εὐχαριστίας, ὃν εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ πάθους, οὗ ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαιρομένων τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπὸ πάσης πονηρίας ἀνθρώπων, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν παρέδωκε ποιεῖν [284] see also 70.4). Just., dial. 117 elaborates on the theme of sacrifice and prayer, insisting on the legitimacy of Christian sacrifices alone (117.2f.). In his turn Trypho accuses the Christians of assimilating themselves to the heathen, inasmuch as they do not respect festivals, sabbath and cicumcision (Just., dial. 10.2).

[45] Just., 1apol. 13.1: Ἄθεοι μὲν οὖν ὡς οὐκ ἐσμεν, τὸν δημιουργὸν τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς σεβόμενοι, ἀνενδεῆ αἱμάτων καὶ σπονδῶν καὶ θυμιαμάτων, ὡς ἐδιδάχθημεν, λέγοντες, λόγῳ εὐχῆς καὶ εὐχαριστίας ἐφ' οἷς προσφερόμεθα πᾶσιν, ὅση δύναμις, αἰνοῦντες,

In addition to this, Justin's extensive demonology provides a conceptual framework which enables him to approach the expressions of pagan cult critically, as dependent upon the activity of demons: it was by their initiative that men were induced to embrace polytheism and the idolatric cult, of which the demons are fond, and that death, war, adultery, licentiousness and every other evil have spread in the midst of men.[46] There is one feature of such activity which has more directly to do with the manifestations of Christian worship, inasmuch as demons have created a counterfeit of Christian rites. It is the theory of a 'plagiarism' extended from the realm of beliefs and ideas to that of rites, evidence of which can be found in other ecclesiastical authors of the period, for instance Tertullian.[47] For Justin this malign imitation invests also the prophecies about the Son of God. After hearing them, the demons invented the myths about the false gods, though they were not able to understand what had been said symbolically by the prophets.[48] This is the case especially with the prophecy of the cross, although its symbolic relevance is regarded by Justin as endowed with a universal value.[49] Going back to the domain of rite, for Justin the demons attempted to invent surrogates for Christian baptism and eucharist. These imitations are reflected both in the traditional religions and in the mysteric ones. As for the baptismal bath, the demons devised for men aspersions and ablutions in different circumstances, especially when entering the temples to perform sacrifices on their behalf.[50] Justin here

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μόνην ἀξίαν αὐτοῦ τιμὴν ταύτην παραλαβόντες, τὸ τὰ ὑπ□ ἐκείνου εἰς διατροφὴν γενόμενα οὐ πυρὶ δαπανᾶν, ἀλλ' ἑαυτοῖς καὶ τοῖς δεομένοις προσφέρειν (C. Munier [ed.], SC 507, Paris 2006, 158,1-7). See also 24.2. The same point will be taken over later on by Clement of Alexandria (Clem., str. 7.6.31,7) and Tertullian (Tert., or. 28).

[46] Just., 1 apol. 5.2; 2 apol. 5.4.

[47] Cf. the introduction to Tertullian, *De Baptismo, De oratione*, übs. und eing. by D. Schleyer, FC 76, Turnhout 2006, 41, 103-109.

[48] Just., 1 apol. 54; 55.1. Over against this background one can likewise understand Justin's recourse to Greek myth (e.g. the sons of Zeus in 21.1) in order to explain the events of Christ.

[49] Just., 1 apol. 55.

[50] Just., 1 apol. 62.1: Καὶ τὸ λουτρὸν δὴ τοῦτο ἀκούσαντες οἱ δαίμονες διὰ τοῦ προφήτου κεκηρυγμένον ἐνήργησαν καὶ ῥαντίζειν ἑαυτοὺς τοὺς εἰς τὰ ἱερὰ αὐτῶν ἐπιβαίνοντας

sums up a larger spectrum of lustral practices in pagan religion, as shown by the rich exemplification in Tertullian's *De baptismo*.[51] Also for the eucharist he denounces an imitation on the part of the demons, referring to the initiation rite with bread and a water bowl in the mysteries of Mithras.[52] This polemical context altogether unveils a disturbing perception of some affinities between the opposing religious traditions. Justin does not exploit them positively for his apologetic discourse as he does on the other hand with some Greek myths. Yet the characteristic definition he first produces of baptism as 'illumination' (φωτισμός) apparently betrays a crosscultural mixing of horizons, if it is borrowed from the ritual language of the Eleusinian mysteries.[53] As a consequence, Justin may be taken as a witness of the increasing appropriation of mysteric terminology in order to express Christian rites. To be true, in Justin it is an isolated occurrence, and not every apologist was well disposed towards a terminological annexation of this kind, preferring like Tertullian to maintain a strict distinction between Christian mysteries and pagan ones, also to avoid any syncretistic confusion, as in some forms of Gnosticism.[54] We shall subsequently discuss to what extent

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καὶ προσιέναι αὐτοῖς μέλλοντας λοιβὰς καὶ κνίσας ἀποτελοῦντας· τέλεον δὲ καὶ λούεσθαι ἐπιόντας πρὶν ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὰ ἱερά, ἔνθα ἵδρυνται, ἐνεργοῦσι (292,1-294,6).

[51] Tert., bapt. 5 (5.1: *Hic quoque studium diaboli recognoscimus res dei aemulantis, cum et ipse baptismum in suis exercet* [172]).

[52] Just., 1 apol. 66.4: Ὅπερ καὶ ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Μίθρα μυστηρίοις παρέδωκαν γίνεσθαι μιμησάμενοι οἱ πονηροὶ δαίμονες· ὅτι γὰρ ἄρτος καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατος τίθεται ἐν ταῖς τοῦ μυουμένου τελεταῖς μετ' ἐπιλόγων τινῶν, ἢ ἐπίστασθε ἢ μαθεῖν δύνασθε (308,19-22). This is the only occurrence of the word teleth / in the *Apologies*, while dial. 35.4 uses it polemically, comparing the Christian gnostics with the pagans.

[53] Just., 1 apol. 61.12: Καλεῖται δὲ τοῦτο τὸ λουτρὸν φωτισμός, ὡς φωτιζομένων τὴν διάνοιαν τῶν ταῦτα μανθανόντων (292,39-41). The term (already attested in 2Cor 4:4.6) figures more often in Clement of Alexandria (prot. 10.94,2: Ἐπὶ τὸ λουτρόν, ἐπὶ τὴν σωτηρίαν, ἐπὶ τὸν φωτισμὸν παρακαλεῖ (C. Mondésert / A. Plassart [eds.], SC 2bis, Paris ²1949, repr. 2004, 162); Clem., paed. 1.6,26; 1.6,30. For the discussion on the ascendancy of Justin's passage see A. Cacciari, *In margine a Giustino, dial. VII, 3: "le porte della luce"*, in: P. Serra Zanetti (ed.), *In verbis verum amare*, Firenze 1980, 101-134 (122f.).

[54] "Um jeden Anklang an heidnische Mysterien-Kulte (und an die gnostischen 'Mysterien') zu vermeiden und die Wesensverschiedenheit der christlichen Sakra-

the concept adopted by Justin influences his positive presentation of Christian worship, which is indeed - as we already know - the most detailed and substantial among the early apologists.

A figure like Athenagoras also tends to avoid recourse to mysteric terminology, even if he does not share the aggressive attitude of some of his colleagues with regard to pagan religion.[55] His *Embassy* indeed devotes its longest part to respond to the charge of 'atheism' (4-30), later adding replies to the accusation of incest (32-34) as well as of infanticide and ritual anthropophagy (35f.). By denying the 'atheism' of Christians Athenagoras elaborates the perspective of monotheism and occasionally comes to deal with the issue of pagan cult. As just stated, he assumes a rather 'conciliating' position, admitting that the Athenians had been right to intervene against Diagoras, who spread the mysteries of Eleusis and the doctrine of Orphism, because of his atheism.[56] Furthermore, he even assures his addressees - the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus - that he does not want "to denigrate the idols".[57] As for the charge

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mente auch in der Terminologie zum Ausdruck zu bringen, greift Tertullian für Taufe und Eucharistie nie auf den Terminus *mysterium* zurück, während er für die heidnischen Mysterien außer *arcana, sollemnia, sacra* auch den Gräzismus *mysteria* bzw. *mysterium* verwendet." (D. Schleyer in Tertullian, *De Baptismo, De oratione*, 108-109). As for the practice of Gnostic mysteries, see for instance N. Förster, *Marcus Magus. Kult, Lehre und Gemeindeleben einer valentinianischen Gnostikergruppe*, WUNT 114, Tübingen 1999.

[55] Athenagoras uses the term τελετή only once (Athenag., leg. 1.1: τελετὰς καὶ μυστήρια [ed. Pouderon 70,8]), while μυστήρια figures 7 times, always in the plural form. For F. Valente, *Mysterion in Atenagora*, in: A.M. Mazzanti (ed.), *Il volto del mistero. Mistero e rivelazione nella cultura religiosa tardoantica*, Bologna 2006, 80, "il termine assume un'accezione totalmente negativa, legata da un lato alla sfera emotiva e passionale, dall'altro ad una religiosità che confonde materia e divinità, poiché rifiuta la ragione come strumento di conoscenza del divino".

[56] Athenag., leg. 4.1. See also Tat., orat. 27.1.

[57] Athenag., leg. 18.2: δεήσομαι δὲ ὑμῶν, μέγιστοι αὐτοκρατόρων, πρὸ τοῦ λόγου ἀληθεῖς παρεχομένῳ τοὺς λογισμοὺς συγγνῶναι· οὐ γὰρ προκείμενόν μοι ἐλέγχειν τὰ εἴδωλα, ἀλλὰ ἀπολυόμενος τὰς διαβολὰς λογισμὸν τῆς προαιρέσεως ἡμῶν παρέχω (126.8-128.12). For Pouderon, 2005, 207, "l'Apologiste athénien se caractérise par sa modération et son esprit de conciliation, qui le conduisirent a considérer

of refusing to sacrifice, Athenagoras repeats the usual argument referring to the transcendence of the Creator and insisting instead on the idea that prayer is the proper way to address oneself to God.[58] Under this respect he is in a line of continuity with Justin, although he succeeds better in formulating the equation 'sacrifice = prayer', to support which he can also rely on a fundamental passage of the New Testament on the Christian way of praying (1Tim 2:8).[59] The awareness of such ascendence is attested to also by the first exploitation in early apologetics of the Pauline passage of Rom 12:1, so as to present Christian worship, in the Apostle's words, as a 'rational cult' (λογικὴ λατρεία).[60]

We have so far examined the principal attitudes displayed by the early Apologists with respect to their critique of pagan worship. Our picture would not change, if we added more witnesses of this early period, such as Tatian or Clement of Alexandria among the Greeks or Tertullian and Minucius Felix among the Latins. Apart from their difference of emphasis according to the more or less polemical treatment of the topic, they do not attest in practice a new range of insights. Perhaps the only novelties can be seen, on the one

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la religion du paganisme et ses dieux avec un certain respect. La polémique qu'il mène contre elle se veut l'héritière de la critique philosophique, et n'en dépasse pas les bornes: dénigrement de la religion des poètes, mais non des cultes des cités". On the contrary, for Valente, 2006, 81, Athenagoras is concerned with stressing "la profonda distanza del culto cristiano da quello pagano: nessun contatto, nessun paragone, nemmeno a livello terminologico, può essere ipotizzato tra le due diverse forme di religiosità".

[58] Athenag., leg. 13.

[59] Athenag., leg. 13.3: Ὅταν <οὖν> ἔχοντες τὸν δημιουργὸν θεὸν συνέχοντα καὶ ἐποπτεύοντα ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ τέχνῃ καθ᾽ ἣν ἄγει τὰ πάντα, ἐπαίρωμεν ὁσίους χεῖρας αὐτῷ, ποίας ἔτι χρείαν ἑκατόμβης ἔχει [...] (112,17-19).

[60] See Athenag., leg. 13.4 commenting thus upon the quotation from Hom., Il. 9.499-501: Τί δὲ μοι ὁλοκαυτώσεων, ὧν μὴ δεῖται ὁ θεός; καίτοι προσφέρειν, δέον ἀναίμακτον θυσίαν καὶ λογικὴν προσάγειν λατρείαν (112,24-26). Tertullian adopts this Pauline motif, as shown by his idea of Christian prayer as a *rationale officium* opposed to *superstitio* (Tert., or. 15.1: *huiusmodi enim non religioni, sed superstitioni deputantur, affectata et coacta et curiosi potius quam rationalis officii, certe vel eo coercenda, quod gentilibus adaequent* [ed. Schleyer, 242,12-15]).

hand, in Tatian's rejection of divination - this being just one aspect of his overall repudiation of the religious and cultural system of the Greeks - and on the other hand in Clement of Alexandria's intransigent destruction both of traditional religion and the mysteries over against his appraisal of philosophy and, to a lesser extent, of poetry.[61] Yet in Tatian's invective against every form of pagan cult we catch at least a personal note, when he confesses to have participated in the mysteries before he discovered the message of the Bible, those 'barbarian writings' (γραφαῖς [...] βαρβαρικαῖς) which, as in the case of Justin, prompted him to convert to Christianity.[62] As for Clement's great interest in the mysteries throughout his *Protreptic*, this probably does not have to do with a new sensibility determined by the actual religious atmosphere of his time, but rather with his

[61] See Tat., orat. 19.2. His denunciation of the Pythia anticipates Origen's critique of oracles in *Contra Celsum*. See M. Fédou, *Christianisme et religions païennes dans le Contre Celse d'Origène*, ThH 81, Paris 1988, 440-447. As for Clement's critique of pagan religion, see Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 58: "Clemens erkannte [...] die Gefahr, daß ein exklusiver Wahrheitsanspruch das Christentum gerade im Kulturzentrum Alexandrien diskreditieren, isolieren und zu einer bloßen Sekte werden lassen mußte. Daher verknüpfte er die kompromißlose Kritik des heidnischen Religionswesens und der Mysterienkulte (1-63) mit einer differenzierten Wertung der Philosophie und Dichtung, die trotz unzulänglicher Gottesvorstellungen (64-67) dennoch etwas Wahres über Gott auszusagen vermochten (68-72), wurden doch die Philosophen, insbesondere Platon, wie die Dichter (73-76) von der Wahrheit selbst inspiriert".

[62] Tat., orat. 29.1: Ταῦτ' οὖν ἰδών, ἔτι δὲ καὶ μυστηρίων μεταλαβὼν καὶ τὰς παρὰ πᾶσι θρησκείας δοκιμάσας, διὰ θηλυδριῶν καὶ ἀνδρογύνων συνισταμένας (M. Marcovich [ed.], PTS 43, Berlin 1995, 55,1-3). This passage can be compared to Tertullian's vindication of the supremacy of the Bible over against the whole cultural and religious heritage of the heathen, including their cults, in Tert., apol. 19.2: *Omnes itaque substantias omnesque materias, origines, ordines, venas veterani cuiusque stili vestri, gentes etiam plerasque et urbes insignes historiarum et canas memoriarum, ipsas denique effigies litterarum, indices custodesque rerum, et (puto adhuc minus dicimus) ipsos, inquam, deos vestros, ipsa templa et oracula et sacra unius interim prophetae scrinium saeculis vincit, in quo videtur thesaurus collocatus totius Iudaici sacramenti et inde iam et nostri* (120,50-121,57).

literary knowledge.[63] It is well known that the Alexandrian author is a crown witness as far as Christian appropriation of mysteric terminology is concerned. In the context of the preceding observations, we could therefore say that by opposing the cultic experiences of paganism Clement refashions the conceptuality of Christian worship by having recourse to the categories of his adversaries.[64] Nevertheless, apart from the association between Orpheus and Christ and some further borrowings of language and images culminating in the final exhortation to convert, the *Protreptic* does not support the idea of a Christian transformation of the mysteries,[65] as shown among other things by the impossibility of a parallelism Dionysus -

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[63] F. Jourdan, *Dionysos dans le Protreptique de Clément d'Alexandrie. Initiations dionysiaques et mystères chrétiens*, in: RHR 223 (2006), 265-282 (272). Yet the discrediting portrait of the "worshippers of idols" in Clem., prot. 10.91,1 may report something of a direct experience (ἰδέτω τις ὑμῶν τοὺς παρὰ τοῖς εἰδώλοις λατρεύοντας, κόμῃ ῥυπῶντας, ἐσθῆτι πιναρᾷ καὶ κατερρωγυίᾳ καθυβρισμένους, λουτρῶν μὲν παντάπασιν ἀπειράτους, ταῖς δὲ τῶν ὀνύχων ἀκμαῖς ἐκτεθηριωμένους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τῶν αἰδοίων ἀφῃρημένους, ἔργῳ δεικνύντας τῶν εἰδώλων τὰ τεμένη τάφους τινὰς ἢ δεσμωτήρια· οὗτοί μοι δοκοῦσι πενθεῖν, οὐ θρῃσκεύειν τοὺς θεούς, ἐλέου μᾶλλον ἢ θεοσεβείας ἄξια πεπονθότες [159]).

[64] See Clem., prot. 12.118,4: τότε μου κατοπτεύσεις τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐκείνοις τελεσθήσῃ μυστηρίοις [188]; 12.119,1: δείξω σοι τὸν λόγον καὶ τοῦ λόγου τὰ μυστήρια, κατὰ τὴν σὴν διηγούμενος εἰκόνα [188]; and especially 12.120,1-3, with Mondésert's interesting remarks hereto: "Peut-être faut-il voir ici (chants d'un chœur, hymne des anges, lecture des prophètes), plus loin, 120, 1-3 (lumière des torches, Jésus grand-prêtre, don parfait du Logos) et plus haut, 119, 1 ('mystères du Logos') des allusions à la liturgie eucharistique" (Mondésert, SC 2bis, 189 no. 2). To support this impression he points to Clem., str. 1.1,1-3; 4.14.113,3; 7.7.49,3f. Cf. also C. Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien*, UALG 26, Berlin 1987.

[65] Cf. e.g. Clem., prot. 1.10,2-3 where he deconstructs the language of mysteries by substituting cultic performance with the practice of virtue (1.10,2: Σὺ δὲ εἰ ποθεῖς ἰδεῖν ὡς ἀληθῶς τὸν θεόν, καθαρσίων μεταλάμβανε θεοπρεπῶν, οὐ δάφνης πετάλων καὶ ταινιῶν τίνων ἐρίῳ καὶ πορφύρᾳ πεποικιλμένων, δικαιοσύνην δὲ ἀναδησάμενος καὶ τῆς ἐγκρατείας τὰ πέταλα περιθέμενος πολυπραγμόνει Χριστόν [65]).

Christ.[66] On the contrary, the Christian assumption of the mysteric heritage as well as of philosophical religion will be assured by a non directly apologetic writing like the *Stromateis*. It is within this work then that we encounter a developed reflection on the ideal worship of the 'gnostic' and the first Greek Christian treatise on prayer,[67] while in the *Protreptic* the alternative to pagan cult is preferably suggested in the framework of Christian anthropology and ethics. Accordingly Clement contrasts the statues of the idols with the 'true images of God', i.e. Christians living in conformity with the original nature and vocation of man.[68]

4. The Testimony of Early Apologetics on Christian Prayer and Cult

Our analysis has perhaps proved to be more rewarding than we initially expected. Apart from the mere rejection of pagan cults and the more or less openly implied construction of a distinctive Christian worship by opposing the forms of pagan religion, here and there we noticed the emergence of a positive Christian discourse on cult and prayer, at least as a first attempt. There is likewise, as signalled at the beginning, some positive evidence in our sources, too, though apparently rather scanty. It is mainly connected with the ideal picture of the Christian way of life which sums up an essential argument of apologetic discourse against pagan charges.[69]

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[66] As stated by A. van den Hoek, *Apologetic and Protreptic Discourse in Clement of Alexandria*, in: *L'apologétique chrétienne gréco-latine à l'époque prénicénienne*, 2005, 56, "Clement turns traditional values upside down, branding Greek piety as impiety, religion as superstition, legitimacy as illegitimate, and truth as falsehood. There is no equivalency in the comparison, since the one is by far inferior to the other. In Clement's view, the pagan cults were bastardizations of the truth".

[67] Clem., str. 7.

[68] Clem., prot. 4.59,2: ἡμεῖς γάρ, ἡμεῖς ἐσμὲν οἱ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ θεοῦ περιφέροντες ἐν τῷ ζῶντι καὶ κινουμένῳ τούτῳ ἀγάλματι, τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, σύνοικον εἰκόνα, σύμβουλον, συνόμιλον, συνέστιον, συμπαθῆ, ὑπερπαθῆ· ἀνάθημα γεγόναμεν τῷ θεῷ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ (123). Cf. also 6.69,2f.; 9.86,2: θεοσέβεια δὲ ἐξομοιοῦσα τῷ θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατάλληλον ἐπιγράφεται διδάσκαλον θεὸν τὸν καὶ μόνον ἀπεικάσαι κατ' ἀξίαν δυνάμενον ἄνθρωπον θεῷ (154); 10.98,2-4.

[69] U. Kühneweg, *Die griechischen Apologeten und die christliche Ethik*, in: VigChr 42 (1988), 112-120. In my contribution L. Perrone, *Christianity as 'Practice' in Origen's Contra Cel-*

This is precisely the context within which our earliest witness, Aristides' *Apology*, introduces the issue of prayer. In its paradigmatic epilogue the Christians are first presented, still by contrast, as those who "abstain from worshipping foreign gods" or "idols in the image of man", and do not partake of the "meals of sacrifices", while the mention of their burial practice or fasting days aims at stressing the fraternal spirit which reigns among them.[70] Thus Aristides insists on the sociability of the Christian community, with its high ethos of a biblical and evangelical cast, and does not make any explicit reference to its rites, if not for the generic recommendation of consulting its books on this and other points.[71] We nevertheless find an interesting approach to prayer, inasmuch as Aristides proposes a model in which praise and thanksgiving appear as the dominant features. If the whole day schedule is governed by the thanksgiving to God for his benevolence, this is especially true for the initial and the final moments of life.[72] Also when asking God for their needs, the Christians "address Him with demands" for things "convenient for Him to bestow and for men to receive".[73] By such formulations Aristides seems to comply with the conceptions of a 'normative' prayer, that is a prayer according both to philosophical and biblical standards, as we mainly see later on in Clement's and Origen's euchological treaties.[74] Finally, the Syriac recension also mentions the intercessory prayer on behalf of the whole world thanks to which

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sum, in: R. Somos / G. Heidl (eds.), *Origeniana Nona* (forthcoming) I observed the persistence of this motif in Origen's great apology and the new accent he confers on it.

[70] Cf. respectively the Greek recension (Arist., apol. 15.5: θεοὺς ἀλλοτρίους οὐ προσκυνοῦσιν [116] and the Syriac one (15.3; 15.5).

[71] See the Syriac recension in Arist., apol. 16.4, mentioning "the glory of their cult" (*shûbhḥâ dh-pûlḥânhon* [SC 470, p. 244 = 16, 3]).

[72] Arist., apol. 15.8f.

[73] Arist., apol. 16.1, according to the Syriac recension (SC 470, p. 242), while the Greek only reads as follows: ὧν χρείαν αὐτοὶ ἔχουσι τοῦ Θεοῦ αἰτοῦνται (122).

[74] For this larger context see E. von Severus, *Gebet*, in: RAC 8 (1972), 1134 - 1258 (1146f.) and my article L. Perrone, *Discorso sulla preghiera e costruzione dell'identità nel cristianesimo antico (I-III sec.)*, in: ASEs 21 (2004), 257-287.

alone its survival is assured.[75] In this way Aristides contributes to drawing a picture of a 'rational cult' (to recall the Pauline passage of Rom 12:1), insofar as it is substantially centered on prayer. Furthermore he is able to reckon with the political implications of Roman religion by asserting the fundamental role of Christian intercession to God. Both aspects can be further followed throughout the early apologetic literature.

Justin's *First Apology* presents a shorter passage concurring with Aristides' view. It outlines the essential place of prayer in the life of Christians over against the practice of pagan sacrifice, thus implying its substitution or equation with prayer.[76] Here too emphasis is laid on prayer to God expressed as thanksgiving, and praise for the benefits bestowed on humankind. There may also be a hint at communal rather than individual prayer, since Justin mentions the use of 'hymns'. At the same time he restates the prayer of demand out of an attitude of faith, placing it at a possibly higher level than Aristides, because its object is now indicated as the request of 'incorruptibility'.[77] By these remarks Justin seems to betray a consciousness of the philosophically inspired debate on a 'spiritual' prayer concerned only with heavenly goods, the obtaining of material ones being apparently left to the initiative of God's providence.[78] Justin's perspective is indeed more complex, since for him

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[75] Arist., apol. 16.7 (*metul takhshephthon d-kristiâne* [SC 470, p. 242 = 16,6]). The motif seems to anticipate the idea expressed in Diogn. 6.7, though here without a direct connection with prayer. On this passage and its philosophical roots, see P.-H. Poirier, *Les chrétiens et la garde du monde. À propos de l'Ad Diognetum VI*, in: B. Pouderon / J. Doré (eds.), 1998, 177-186. Compare with it Just., 2 apol. 7.1.

[76] Just., 1 apol. 13.1 (see *supra* no. 45). Justin expressly states this equation in dial. 117.2: ὅτι μὲν οὖν καὶ εὐχαὶ καὶ εὐχαριστίαι, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀξίων γινόμεναι, τέλειαι μόναι καὶ εὐάρεστοί εἰσι τῷ θεῷ θυσίαι, καὶ αὐτός φημί (496-498).

[77] Just., 1 apol. 13.2: ἐκείνῳ δὲ εὐχαρίστους ὄντας διὰ λόγου πομπὰς καὶ ὕμνους πέμπειν ὑπέρ τε τοῦ γεγονέναι καὶ τῶν εἰς εὐρωστίαν πόρων πάντων, ποιοτήτων μὲν γενῶν καὶ μεταβολῶν ὡρῶν, καὶ τοῦ πάλιν ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ γενέσθαι διὰ πίστιν τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ αἰτήσεις πέμποντες, τίς σωφρονῶν οὐχ ὁμολογήσει [...] (160). C. Munier (ibid., no. 1) points to some affinities with stoic thought.

[78] Justin's awareness of the philosophical question is attested to by his remarks in dial 1.4. See J. Pépin, *Prière et providence au 2e siècle (Justin, Dial. I 4)*, in: F. Bossier

prayer alone does not exhaust the cult of Christians, although he certainly supports to a large extent the line already started with Aristides and subsequently pursued in his turn by Athenagoras. Even if the *Legatio* does not positively touch the issue of cult, prayer is once more vindicated as its proper expression in contradistinction to sacrifice, while its importance for the Empire is especially stressed.[79] As a matter of fact, the political framework of the Roman state determines a stronger impact on Athenagoras' view of prayer. It is not generally intercession for the welfare of society, as with Aristides, but more precisely a prayer for the dynastic continuity of the Emperors, and for the expansion and growth of the Empire.[80] Similarly Theophilus' *Ad Autolycum* proclaims prayer as the way Christians honour the Emperor, instead of adoring him.[81]

So far no special emphasis has come to light in our sources with regard to Christian prayer as distinguished from its pagan equivalents. It is the merit of Tertullian's *Apologeticum* to have introduced a reflection on this aspect, while dwelling on a larger scale upon the Christian support of the state by means of prayer.[82] Instead of restricting himself to the renewed assertion of loyalism towards the

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et al. (eds.), *Images of Man in Ancient and Medieval Thought. Studia Gerardo Verbeke ab amicis et collegis dicata*, Louvain 1976, 111-125.

[79] One could see at least a hint at the liturgical dimension of the Christian life, if Athenagoras' remarks on the kiss among the faithful are related, as it seems, to a custom practiced during their rites: see Athenag., leg. 32.5. This is attested to by Just., 1 apol. 65.2 and Tert., or. 18.1, while Clem., paed. 3.81,2 discusses its actual practice.

[80] Athenag., leg. 37.2: Τίνες γὰρ καὶ δικαιότεροι ὧν δέονται τυχεῖν ἢ οἵτινες περὶ μὲν τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς ὑμετέρας εὐχόμεθα, ἵνα παῖς μὲν παρὰ πατρὸς κατὰ τὸ δικαιότατον διαδέχησθε τὴν βασιλείαν, αὔξην δὲ καὶ ἐπίδοσιν καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ ὑμῶν, πάντων ὑποχειρίων γιγνομένων, λαμβάνῃ; (208).

[81] Theoph., Autol. 1.11: Τοιγαροῦν μᾶλλον τιμήσω τὸν βασιλέα, οὐ προσκυνῶν αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ εὐχόμενος ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ· θεῷ δὲ τῷ ὄντως θεῷ καὶ ἀληθεῖ προσκυνῶ, εἰδὼς ὅτι ὁ βασιλεὺς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γέγονεν (M. Marcovich [ed.], PTS 44, Berlin 1995, 30,1-3). Pouderon, 2005, 60f. stresses the continuity of such an attitude with Hellenistic Judaism.

[82] Tert., apol. 30.1: *Nos enim pro salute imperatorum Deum invocamus aeternum, Deum verum, Deum vivum, quem et ipsi imperatores propitium sibi praeter ceteros malunt. Sciunt quis illis dederit imperium; sciunt, qua homines, quis et animam; sentiunt eum esse*

Roman state and its leaders or the assurance of the general welfare of society resting upon the praying aid of his co-religionists, as the previous apologists had done, Tertullian exploits this opportunity in order to draw a different image of Christian prayer.[83] Thus he interprets the gesture of the extended hands as a sign of innocence (implicitly referring to Christ on the cross as the recommended pattern for those who pray, as becomes clear a little later),[84] while the lack of a head-covering should further stress the sincerity of the spiritual dispositions.[85] This inner attitude of authenticity culminates in a personal 'silent prayer' (*de pectore*) without following the instructions of an external person invested with the performance of rites. In this way the act of praying becomes for Tertullian a true spiritual sacrifice, the only one expected by God, and those who perform it

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Deum solum, in cuius solius potestate sunt, a quo sunt secundi, post quem primi, ante omnes et super omnes deos (141,1-7).

[83] Tert., apol. 30.4: *Illuc sursum suspicientes Christiani manibus expansis, quia innocuis, capite nudato, quia non erubescimus, denique sine monitore, quia de pectore oramus, precantes sumus semper pro omnibus imperatoribus, vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum, quaecumque hominis et Caesaris vota sunt* (141,17-23). As for Tertullian's vindication of a 'prayer of the heart', we should not forget that praying for the government had long since taken on an established character, as shown for instance by 1Clem 61:1-2 (see H. Löhr, *Ein 'missing Link' in der Geschichte jüdischen und christlichen Gebets*, in: A. Gerhards / A. Doeker / P. Ebenbauer (eds.), *Identität durch Gebet. Zur gemeinschaftsbildenden Funktion institutionalisierten Betens in Judentum und Christentum*, Paderborn 2003, 297; id., *Studien zum frühchristlichen und frühjüdischen Gebet*, Tübingen 2003. Yet A. Hamman, *La prière chrétienne et la prière païenne, formes et différences*, in: ANRW 2.32,2, Berlin 1980, 1190-1247 (1223) underlines as a major difference the preference accorded by Christians to 'spontaneous' prayer instead of following established formulas.

[84] See Tert., apol. 30.7: *Sic itaque nos as Deum expansos ungulae fodiant, cruces suspendant, ignes lambant, gladii guttura detruncent, bestiae insiliant: paratus est ad omne supplicium ipse habitus orantis Christiani* (142,35-38). On this point cf. V. Saxer, *«Il étendit les mains à l'heure de sa Passion». le thème de l'orant/-te dans la littérature chrétienne des IIe et IIIe siècles*, in: Aug. 20 (1980), 335-365 (338).

[85] To critically appreciate the negative picture of Roman prayer proposed by Tertullian in this passage, see von Severus, 1972, 1157-1160.

are its authentic priests, so that in both respects the regime of Roman religion undergoes a Christian substitution.[86] Going beyond a polemical reply Tertullian sketches a picture of prayer whose distinctive character can be further appreciated in the light of his *De oratione*. As argued in this earliest commentary on the Lord's Prayer, the genuine sacrifice commanded by God is prayer according to the teaching of Jesus. As such it is the truly 'spiritual sacrifice' which has abolished the old ones.[87] Conforming to the 'novelty' of Christian prayer, a point especially stressed in *De oratione* (though mainly over against the *vetus oratio* of the Old Testament), the *Apologeticum* reinforces the presumption of its authenticity by appealing to the evangelical command to pray for our enemies.[88] Finally, perform-

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[86] Tert., apol. 30.5f.: *Haec ab alio orare non possum, quam a quo me scio consecuturum, quoniam et ipse est qui solus praestat, et ego sum cui impetrare debetur, famulus eius, qui eum solus observo, qui pro disciplina eius occidor, qui ei offero opimam et maiorem hostiam, quam ipse mandavit, orationem de carne pudica, de anima innocenti, de spiritu sancto profectam, non grana turis unius assis, Arabicae arboris lacrimas, nec duas meri guttas, nec sanguinem reprobi bovis mori optantis, et post omnia inquinamenta etiam conscientiam spurcam: ut mirer, cum hostiae probantur penes vos a vitiosissimis sacerdotibus, cur praecordia potius victimarum quam ipsorum sacrificantium examinantur* (141,23-34).

[87] Tert., or. 28.1: *Haec est enim hostia spiritalis, quae pristina sacrificia delevit* (272,6f.). Referring to Joh 4:23 he vindicates the authentic priesthood of the Christians: *Nos sumus veri adoratores et veri sacerdotes, qui spiritu orantes spiritu sacrificamus orationem hostiam Dei propriam et acceptabilem* (28.3 [272,14-16]). The confrontation with pagan prayer under the category of vacua observatio is developed in or. 15-17. See particularly 15.1 (*ut est quorundam expositis paenulis orationem facere; sic enim adeunt ad idola nationes* [242,15-17]) and 16.5 (*porro cum proinde faciant nationes vel adoratis sigillaribus suis residendo, vel propterea in nobis reprehendi meretur, quod apud idola celebratur* [244]). As for the silent prayer, Tertullian here exploits pagan tradition (17.3f.: *Deus autem non vocis, sed cordis auditor est, sicut conspector. Daemonium oraculi Pythii: "Et mutum", inquit, "intellego et non loquentem exaudio". Dei aures sonum expectant?* [246,14-17]).

[88] Tert., apol. 31 calls for the authority of the Holy writings (31.2: *scitote ex illis, praeceptum esse nobis ad redundantiam benignitatis, etiam pro inimicis Deum orare et persecutoribus nostris bona precari* [142,6-9]) also by quoting 1Tim 2:1f. Also Athenag., leg. 37.3 and Theoph., Autol. 3.14 refer to 1Tim 2:1, as Origen will do later on, in Or., Cels. 8.73.

ing the 'sacrifice' of prayer is proposed by Tertullian as the only effective means to prevent the end of the world and consequently to assure the permanence of the Roman Empire.[89]

The dominant feature of the apologetic discourse on prayer and cult - to be summarized for the sake of convenience under the heading of a 'rational worship' - apparently comes to its apex in Tertullian's *Apologeticum*, which by the way is also able to fill this paradigm with a special Christian emphasis. But even the most developed form of this traditional view could not supply an adequate category to include the various expressions of Christian worship and the ritual life of the new religion. We can observe this within the economy of the *Apologeticum* itself, when Tertullian illustrates "the activities of the Christian sect" (*negotia Christianae factionis*), without resolving these into the usual praise of an idealized moral behaviour. Contrary to the prevailing approach among early apologists - whose best expression may be found in *Ad Diognetum* -, he also focuses on the cultic aspects. Yet he was not the first to do this, since Justin had gone even further than Tertullian by describing the rites of baptism and eucharist as well as the liturgical habits of the Christian communities in the *First Apology*. Justin thus unveils the Christian 'mysteries' to pagan eyes much more than is the case with Tertullian, with his presentation of the communal meetings and the celebration of the *agape*.[90]

This is not the place for a detailed investigation of both witnesses, but they can help us draw a sort of conclusion on the specificity and limits of the apologetic approach to our issue. From this point of view, what strikes the reader in Justin's report is the different nature of the several arguments he puts forward on behalf of both baptism and the eucharist. He is obviously concerned with explain-

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[89] Tert., apol. 32.1: *Est et alia maior necessitas nobis orandi pro imperatoribus, etiam pro omni statu imperii rebusque Romanis, qui vim maximam universo orbi imminentem ipsamque clausulam saeculi acerbitates horrendas comminantem Romani imperii commeatu scimus retardari. Itaque nolumus experiri et, dum precamur differri, Romanae diuturnitati favemus* (142,1-143,7) See also 40.13: *Et tamen, si pristinas clades comparemus, leviora nunc accidunt, ex quo Christianos a Deo orbis accepit. Exinde enim et innocentia saeculi iniquitates temperavit et deprecatores Dei esse coeperunt* (155,51-54).

[90] See respectively Just., 1 apol. 61.65-67 and Tert., apol. 39.

ing to foreigners these two rites in their distinctive profile and at the same time avoiding confusion with similar forms of worship in pagan religion.[91] To reach this goal he adopts scriptural proofs, philosophical arguments and doctrinal traditions apparently without any embarrassment over this mixture.[92] So for baptism, among other aspects, Justin relies on the idea of a 'new birth' preached by the Lord (Joh 3:3.5) and announced by the prophet Isaiah (Jes 1:16-18.20), and supports the scriptural authority with a justification of an anthropological nature for the ritual bath, yet attributing it to the doctrine of the Apostles.[93] According to this explanation, the baptismal bath aims at purifying men of their bad habits and deeds, connected with a birth they could not dispose of, so that they may become "children of free will and knowledge".[94] Maybe we have here traces of an early 'catechesis',[95] but Justin's argument seems rather to be philosophically inspired, and as such still dictated by the demands of an apologetic approach, as happens with his subsequent discussion on the pagan counterfeit of baptism.[96] On the other

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[91] Löhr, *Studien zum frühchristlichen und frühjüdischen Gebet*, 427-435. Justin, by enlarging his apologetic agenda, wants to assure a complete exposition, as he states in 1 apol. 61.1: Ὃν τρόπον δὲ καὶ ἀνεθήκαμεν ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ καινοποιηθέντες διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐξηγησόμεθα, ὅπως μὴ τοῦτο παραλιπόντες δόξωμεν πονηρεύειν τι ἐν τῇ ἐξηγήσει (288,1-3).

[92] On Justin's elaboration of a liturgical language see A. Cacciari, *Aspetti della formazione di un linguaggio liturgico in Giustino*, in: E. Manicardi / F. Ruggiero (eds.), *Liturgia ed evangelizzazione nell'epoca dei Padri e nella Chiesa del Vaticano II. Studi in onore di Enzo Lodi*, Bologna 1996, 77-86.

[93] Just., 1 apol. 61.9: Καὶ λόγον δὲ εἰς τοῦτο παρὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐμάθομεν τοῦτον (290,27f.).

[94] Just., 1 apol. 61.10: Ἐπειδὴ τὴν πρώτην γένεσιν ἡμῶν ἀγνοοῦντες κατ' ἀνάγκην γεγεννήμεθα ἐξ ὑγρᾶς σπορᾶς κατὰ μῖξιν τὴν τῶν γονέων πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ ἐν ἔθεσι φαύλοις καὶ πονηραῖς ἀνα ‹σ›τροφαῖς γεγόναμεν, ὅπως μὴ ἀνάγκης τέκνα μηδὲ ἀγνοίας μένωμεν ἀλλὰ προαιρέσεως καὶ ἐπιστήμης, ἀφέσεώς τε ἁμαρτιῶν ὑπὲρ ὧν προημάρτομεν τύχωμεν (290,28-292,33).

[95] For C. Munier, *Justin. Apologie pour les chrétiens*, 291 no. 4, "Justin donne ici un résumé de la catéchèse baptismale traditionnelle". See also the recognition of the θεὸς ἄρρητος in 1 apol. 61.11.

[96] Just., 1 apol. 62.

hand, this anti-pagan argument is intertwined with an anti-Jewish one, inasmuch as the assertion of God's ineffability leads him to introduce a discussion on the theophany of Sinai, indicating Christ as its proper protagonist.[97] Continuing his presentation of the initiation rites, Justin then describes the insertion of neophytes into the community and their partaking of the eucharist. Once again, he introduces a varied range of considerations, although the philosophical language is now less perceptible. Perhaps an effort in this sense could still be seen in the mention of prayers taking place in the assembly of the faithful with the aim of making of them "good citizens and observers of the precepts", "after they have learnt the truth".[98] Yet the description of the eucharistic celebration insists on the uniqueness of the food and drink used in this rite, and reserved only to believers, by developing an engaging theological reflection. In this sense Justin does not make any concession to his addressees, apart from explaining some minor details (as, for instance, the Hebrew word 'Amen' or the intervention of the 'so-called deacons' in the rite).[99] He further provides the justification and origin of the eucharist in the authority of the sacred text by appealing to the testimony of the Gospel. Only finally does he go back to a typically apologetic register with the charge of plagiarism on account of the Mithras mysteries. Also the subsequent report on the celebration of Sunday does not betray any specific hermeneutic effort towards the intended audience.[100]

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[97] Just., 1 apol. 63.

[98] Just., 1 apol. 65.1: κοινὰς εὐχὰς ποιησόμενοι ὑπέρ τε ἑαυτῶν καὶ τοῦ φωτισθέντος καὶ ἄλλων πανταχοῦ πάντων εὐτόνως, ὅπως καταξιωθῶμεν τὰ ἀληθῆ μαθόντες καὶ δι' ἔργων ἀγαθοὶ πολιτευταὶ καὶ φύλακες τῶν ἐντεταλμένων εὑρεθῆναι, ὅπως τὴν αἰώνιον σωτηρίαν σωθῶμεν (302,1-7).

[99] Just., 1 apol. 66.2: Οὐ γὰρ ὡς κοινὸν ἄρτον οὐδὲ κοινὸν πόμα ταῦτα λαμβάνομεν· ἀλλ᾽ ὃν τρόπον διὰ Λόγου θεοῦ σαρκοποιηθεὶς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας ἡμῶν ἔσχεν, οὕτως καὶ τὴν δι' εὐχῆς λόγου τοῦ παρ᾽ αὐτοῦ εὐχαριστηθεῖσαν τροφήν, ἐξ ἧς αἷμα καὶ σάρκες κατὰ μεταβολὴν τρέφονται ἡμῶν, ἐκείνου τοῦ σαρκοποιηθέντος Ἰησοῦ καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ἐδιδάχθημεν εἶναι (306,6-12).

[100] Just., 1 apol. 67.

Justin's description of the main Christian rites can be explained from several points of view. In the context of this paper, we may emphasize the fact that it remains a unique piece, a kind of 'meteorite' within early Christian apologetics, inasmuch as it reveals the limits of the categories normally advanced to understand and justify worship by most of its exponents. As such, cult did not prove wholly subsumable into the ethos of an exemplary way of life or even into the idea of prayer as the true 'sacrifice'. Also Tertullian shows his awareness of this, although he does not exceed the usual apologetic framework to the same extent as Justin does. Nevertheless, he strongly emphasizes moral conduct in the light of the worship practiced within Christian communities, so that the liturgy - through common prayer, reading of the Scriptures and spiritual exhortation - can be assumed to be a source and inspiration for the practical behaviour of the faithful.[101] On the other hand it is precisely through worship that both the institutional and fraternal dimensions of Christian communities make their appearance. It is no accident then if Tertullian's picture of the 'activities' deployed by Christians finds its seal in the description of the *agape*, the fraternal meal convened among the 'brethren' as the manifestation of their mutual love.[102] Even if in the *Apologeticum* he remains silent about the celebration of the eucharist, by recalling the practice of such agapic meals it points to a domain in which prayer and cultic actions could develop in their own right, and did not more or less get lost in their

[101] Tert., apol. 39.2-4: *Coimus in coetum et congregationem facimus, ut ad Deum quasi manu facta precationibus ambiamus. [...]. Coimus ad litterarum divinarum commemorationem, si quid praesentium temporum qualitas aut praemonere cogit aut recognoscere. Certe fidem sanctis vocibus pascimus, spem erigimus, fiduciam figimus, disciplinam praeceptorum nihilominus inculcationibus densamus. Ibidem etiam exhortationes, castigationes et censura divina* (150,14-18).

[102] Tert., apol. 39.14: *Quid ergo mirum, si tanta caritas convivatur?* (152,60); 39.18: *Ita saturantur, ut qui meminerint etiam per noctem adorandum Deum sibi esse; ita fabulantur, ut qui sciant Deum audire. Post aquam manualem et lumina, ut quisque de scripturis sanctis vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium Deo canere: hinc probatur quomodo biberit. Aeque oratio convivium dirimit* (152,83-153,88).

refashioning within the particular approach of apologetic discourse. This is of course not to deny, as the French writer Valery Larbaud once brilliantly observed, that it was (also) thanks to such discourse if the majority of the intellectual élite eventually opted for the mystery of Incarnation instead of the mysteries of Eleusis.[103]

[103] V. Larbaud, *Sous l'invocation de Saint Jérôme*, Paris 1946 (I quote from the Italian translation: *Sotto la protezione di san Girolamo*; Palermo 1989, 19: "Al di fuori della predicazione vera e propria e della propaganda del Martirio, letterati, filosofi, scrittori, sulla scia di san Paolo, - gli Apologisti, come quel Quadrato 'discepolo degli Apostoli e pontefice della chiesa di Atene' sotto il regno di Adriano, - avevano composto ad uso degli imperatori e dell'élite intellettuale trattati, opere letterarie, in favore della 'nostra religione', e fu così che nel momento decisivo là dov'era il corpo si sono radunate le aquile, e la grande maggioranza dell'Intellighenzia si è pronunciata contro i misteri di Eleusi a favore del mistero dell'Incarnazione").

Josephus' Contra Apionem as Jewish Apologetics

John M.G. Barclay

Josephus' treatise *Contra Apionem* is the only full extant treatise from ancient Judaism in the apologetic genre (which I will define below), and is one of the most interesting examples of apologetic self-representation from antiquity.[1] None of our Jewish evidence offers more than partial and fragmentary parallels to this treatise, so it is largely impossible to trace antecedents and developments in Jewish apologetics before this point (90s of the first century CE). But *Contra Apionem* more than makes up for this lack: here we have a rich source, entertaining, multi-faceted, intelligent, rhetorically skilful, and almost paradigmatic of the apologetic phenomenon, with all its complexities and ideological possibilities. In this essay I will attempt to accomplish three tasks. First, I will discuss how and, by what definition, the text can be considered an 'apology' in its rhetorical or literary genre. Secondly, I will make brief remarks on parallels in Greek and Roman antiquity, before, thirdly, exploring Josephus' apologetic strategies, which are fine exemplars of the intellectual work required by effective apologetics in any age.

1. Contra Apionem *as Apology*

A brief survey of the text indicates that Josephus has packaged his diverse material in a form dominated by the mode of 'response' to criticisms, accusations and slanders.[2] In the introduction (1.1-5), par-

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[1] For full discussion see my commentary, J.M.G. Barclay, *Flavius Josephus. Translation and Commentary. Vol. 10. Against Apion*, Leiden 2006.

[2] I designate the structure of the work (in outline) as follows:

1.1-5 Introduction

1.6-218 Part One: The Antiquity of the Judeans

1.6-59 Prolegomenon: Comparative Historiography

1.60-68 Reasons for Greek Ignorance of Judeans

ticular prominence is given to *doubts* about Judean antiquity (1.2) and these are presented not simply as an intellectual difficulty, but as the product of hostility: they arise because "a considerable number of people pay attention to the slanders (βλασφημίαι) spread by some out of malice (δυσμένεια)" (1.2). Thus, the first task is to "convict (ἐλέγχειν) those who insult us (οἱ λοιδοροῦντες) of malice and deliberate falsehood" (1.3). This sets the tone for the work as a whole: it is not simply an intellectual exercise in establishing the truth (though it is that, cf. 2.296), but is set within a conflict, as a response to antagonism. Although the first part (1.6-218) is only lightly coloured in such terms, this introduction will be matched by a conclusion (2.287-295) that describes each part of the treatise as a reply to critics. Part One (1.6-218) is concerned with the provision of 'witnesses' to Judean antiquity: after an aggressive prolegomenon, challenging the self-importance of the Greeks (1.6-56), Josephus parades one witness after another on this side, sometimes in explicitly legal terms (1.74). Even though this part makes few references to hostility (e.g., 1.70, 1.72, 1.214), the witness language (1.93; 1.104; 1.219; etc.) keeps alive the sense that this treatise concerns a matter of quasi-legal dispute. And the whole parade is prefaced by the claim that this takes the ground from under the feet of the Judeans' detractors (οἱ βασκαίνοντες) and "the case they have against us" (ἡ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀντιλογία, 1.72).

In Part Two (1.219 - 2.286) the polemical tone is notably heightened, and the language of slander and insult is again at the forefront (1.219-2,22; cf. 1.59). In responding to the stories of Manetho, Chaeremon and Lysimachus (1.227-320), Josephus uses the general language of slander and insult rather than specifically legal terms (1.223; 1.279; 1.319); in truth, the stories at issue hardly concern legal matters, but the honour of Judeans and their supposedly ignominious origin. With

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1.69-218 Evidence for Judean Antiquity (Egyptian; Phoenician; Chaldean; Greek)

1.219 - 2.286 Part Two: Refutation of Slanders

1.219-287 Manetho

1.288-303 Chaeremon

1.304-320 Lysimachus

2.1-144 Apion

2.145-286 Apollonius Molon and others

2.287-296 Conclusion.

Apion, however (2.1-144), the language becomes notably more legal. While Josephus gives a "counter-statement" (ἀντίρρησις) to Apion, as he had to the others (2.1f.), he explicitly presents Apion's comments as legal accusations: "he has composed a charge against us as if in a lawsuit" (κατηγορίαν ἡμῶν ἄντικρυς ὡς ἐν δίκῃ γεγραφότα, 2.4). In this context the language of accusation is extremely prominent (κατηγορία and cognates: 2.4; 2.7; 2.33; 2.117; 2.132; 2.137; 2.142; ἐγκαλέω, 2.137f.; *accuso* and cognates: 2.56; 2.63; 2.68; 2.79), alongside that of "refutation" (ἐλέγχειν, 2.2; 2.5; 2.30), "slander" (βλασφημία and cognates: 2.5, 32, 143; *blasphemia*, 2.79, 88) and "insult" (λοιδορία and cognates: 2.4; 2.30; 2.32; 2.34; 2.49; 2.142; 2.144; cf. *impropero*: 2.56; 2.71; *calumniator*: 2.56; *derogo* and cognates: 2.73; 2.89; *detraho*: 2.90; 2.111). Some of this may derive from the fact that elements of Apion's remarks about the Judeans (their citizenship and their relationship to Rome) originated in real legal proceedings before the emperor (cf. Ant. 18.257-260). But Josephus lets the legal language spread across the whole of Apion's material, as if he were defending a multi-faceted legal case; within this context he also uses the language of "defence" in insisting that some of Apion's charges might be best left "undefended" (ἀναπολόγητα, 2.137; cf. *defensio*, 2.73). While the response sometimes takes the shape of a counter-narrative, extolling the merits of the Judean people (e.g., 2.42-64), Josephus' focus is on a set of "accusations" refuted one by one, with frequent personal invective against the "Egyptian" Apion.

The final segment of Part Two (2.145-186) is introduced as a further stage in Josephus' response to "accusation" and "insult", this time from "Apollonius Molon, Lysimachus, and others" (2.145; 2.147f.).[3] Most of the *content* of this segment concerns the merits of Moses, his constitution, and his laws; as Josephus himself signals (2.148), he does not deal with accusations here in the same way as before, and only rarely does he engage in direct polemics against his opponent (e.g., 2.270). In extolling the Judean constitution, Josephus

[3] Strong arguments have been mounted for taking 2.145-286 as an additional, third, part of the treatise: see e.g. C. Gerber, *Ein Bild des Judentums für Nichtjuden von Flavius Josephus. Untersuchungen zu seiner Schrift Contra Apionem*, Leiden 1997, 67-70. 94-97. For reasons to take it rather as the final section of the refutation of slanders, see Barclay, 2006, xix-xx.

gives a summary of the laws (2.190-218) without explicit reference to "accusations", and often engages in comparisons with other constitutions or city-states, to show the superiority of Judeans (e.g., 2.171-178; 2.219-235; 2.255-275). As Josephus himself half-acknowledges, this gives to this segment of the treatise the flavour of an "encomium" (2.147; 2.287), but he insists that his real purpose is to *defend* his people against scurrilous attacks, and describes his strategy as "the most just form of defence" (δικαιοτάτη ἀπολογία, 2.147). It accords with this description that he intersperses his portrayal of the virtues of Judeans with frequent reference to Apollonius Molon or other "accusers" (2.156; 2.161; 2.182; 2.236-238; 2.255; 2.258; 2.262; 2.270; 2.278; 2.285) so that the apologetic character of this segment is never lost from view. This strategy may owe much to rhetorical convenience: it was well recognized in antiquity that self-praise, particularly if it involved comparison with others, was an obnoxious procedure, liable to evoke envy and hatred rather than admiration.[4] A standard way to avoid this problem was to wrap self-praise within rhetorical defence, to portray oneself as *having to* trumpet one's merits as the only means of self-defence.[5] Josephus more than once signals this tactic, blaming Apollonius Molon for instigating the strategy of (invidious) comparison, which *requires* him to reply in equal terms (2.150; 2.236-238). But the fact remains that Josephus packages his laudatory account of Judean culture within the wrapping of apologetics: however much the encomiastic features might appear to strain the apologetic structure, Josephus' self-description signals clearly enough his chosen rhetorical genre.[6] Thus the conclusion (2.287-296) makes clear what was suggested in the introduction and became increasingly clear as the work progressed, that it is to be understood primarily as a *response* to a varied set of criticisms and accusations.

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[4] See Plutarch's tractate *de laude ipsius* (especially, mor. 540c-f); cf. Demosth., cor. 3f.

[5] Plutarch recommends this as one way of making self-praise bearable (see previous note). Isocrates' speech *Antidosis* is an extended narrative of self-praise wrapped up in the (explicitly fictional) genre of self-defence (see antid. 8-13). On the symbiosis of apologetic and encomium, see further below.

[6] The case for the apologetic character of the whole treatise has been well made by Gerber, 1997, 78-88. 250-252.

We may draw two conclusions from the rhetorical signals in the treatise:

1. Although the material is varied in content (and perhaps in origin), it is presented within a unifying structure as a response to slanders against the Judean people. Taken out of that framework, some of Josephus' material would demand its own rhetorical classification (historical proof, or encomium), but *within this treatise* all the material is presented, more or less successfully, as *response to critics or slanderers.*

2. The criticisms addressed are sometimes described in legal terms as "accusations", and the work is sometimes enlivened by legal metaphors. Often the legal vocabulary of "accusations" (κατηγορίαι, etc.) is juxtaposed with the language of "slanders" and "insults", which is not everywhere specifically *forensic,* but is found frequently in legal contexts and fits naturally there. Similarly, the work is clearly addressed to people outside the debate between Josephus and the critics named (2.296); they are not explicitly allocated the role of judge but take the equivalent role in a non-legal literary context. These facts support the claim that the *whole work* is in some sense a "defence" (ἀπολογία), although the narrowly legal connotations of this term are sometimes strong and sometimes comparatively weak. But, as we shall see, even a fairly tight definition of "apologetic" can encompass this extension of the original legal context of the genre.[7]

In terms of rhetorical genre, this survey thus supports the conclusions of those scholars who characterize our treatise as primarily a work of defence.[8] In attempting to clarify the rhetorical / literary

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[7] Cf. the discussion of the apologetic character of Origen, *Contra Celsum* by M. Frede, *Origen's Treatise Against Celsus,* in: M. Edwards / M. Goodman / S. Price / C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians,* Oxford 1999, 131-155 (136-138). There too the extensive legal language is fictional: there is no real court case (though one might have been threatened by Celsus) and the literary audience takes the place of the court-judge.

[8] See especially J.-W. van Henten / R. Abusch, *The Jews as Typhonians and Josephus' Strategy of Refutation,* in: L.H. Feldman / J.R. Levison (eds.), *Josephus' Contra Apionem. Studies in its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek,* Leiden 1996, 271-309 (295-308); Gerber, 1997, 78-88. They stand in

genre of the work, or at least the generic conventions in which it participates, we are not at all deciding Josephus' authorial intentions. As is well known, but still too often forgotten, the rhetorical genre of a work may, but certainly need not, match what Josephus intended for this work, in terms of audience and effect; the one is a feature of the text itself, the other concerns what lies outside the text, the intentions of the author, and the historical and social context in which he writes. What Josephus says he is doing, and for whom, is not necessarily at all what he is really doing, and for whom. So, I leave aside here the question of the intended audience and intended purpose of this treatise, to establish the limited issue of the relationship between *Contra Apionem* and the rhetorical or literary genre we label 'apologetic'.[9]

Genre classifications are of course scholarly constructs, whether by ancient scholars or by moderns, and one should beware the expectations of rigidity and clarity which such constructions may imply.[10] Nonetheless, some boundaries are necessary if the term is

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disagreement with S. Mason, who considers the work protreptic: see his *The Contra Apionem in Social and Literary Context. An Invitation to Judean Philosophy*, in: L.H. Feldman / J.R. Levison (eds.), *Josephus' Contra Apionem*, AGJU 34, Leiden 1996, 187-228. I would here revise my earlier analysis in J.M.G. Barclay, *Josephus v. Apion. Analysis of an Argument*, in: S. Mason (ed.), *Understanding Josephus. Seven Perspectives*, Sheffield 1998, 194-221 (196-200). Mason and I reached different conclusions on whether the work is primarily deliberative or epideictic, but both of us gave too much weight to the content of 2.145-286 (as against its rhetorical context), and both could have distinguished more clearly between the author's intentions (whether to gain converts or to win sympathy / support) and the rhetorical genre. For a clear analysis of the distinction between authorial intention and rhetorical / literary genre, see L.C. Alexander, *The Acts of the Apostles as an Apologetic Text*, in: Edwards et al. (eds.), 1999, 15-44 (in relation to Acts).

[9] For the audiences of this text (declared, implied and intended) see J.M.G. Barclay, 2006, xlv-li.

[10] The passion for classification can become a straightjacket. As Newsom comments: "Texts do not 'belong' to genres so much as participate in them, invoke them, gesture to them, play in and out of them, and in so doing continually change them. Texts may participate in more than one genre, just as they may be marked in an exaggerated or in a deliberately subtle fashion" (C.A. Newsom, *The Book of Job. A*

to be useful at all. Although it is common for scholars to use the term 'apologetic' in looser and more nebulous ways, it is analytically beneficial to operate with a relatively tight definition. When the term becomes used for *any form* of self-justification or explanation, whether addressed to outsiders or to one's own group, it has probably become too vague to be useful.[11] It seems best to define *apologetic* as defence that is 1) directly formulated against explicit accusations (legal charges or slurs), and 2) directed towards observers (rather than *insiders*), at least at the level of rhetoric (the actual or intended audience is another matter).[12] We should note that, in these terms, *apologetic* motifs / passages may be present within a text that is not itself defined by this genre; only where a text is *dominated*

Contest of Moral Imaginations, Oxford 2003, 12). Nonetheless, in order to appreciate this flexibility and creativity, one has to identify first the genre(s) in which the relevant text participates.

[11] This is, of course, a matter of dispute, and the essay by A. Klostergaard Petersen in this volume adopts a different stance (as did I in my essay, *Apologetics in the Jewish Diaspora*, in: J.R. Bartlett (ed.), *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*, London 2002, 129-148). F. Young, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century*, in: Edwards et al. (eds.), 1999, 81-104 operates with an extremely loose definition in order to include all the products of the Christian Greek 'apologists' of the second century. But it might be better to clarify that many of them did not write 'apologies' in anything like the technical literary / rhetorical sense. G. Sterling's definition of 'apologetic historiography' (in which he includes Josephus' *Antiquitates*) is similarly broad: "the story of a subgroup of people in an extended prose narrative written by a member of the group who follows the group's own traditions but Hellenizes them in an effort to establish the identity of the group within the setting of the larger world" (*Historiography and Self-Definition. Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography*, Leiden 1992, 17). This has lost touch with the core notion of response to criticisms or charges. For that core notion, see Eusebius' description of Christian works that arrange ἐλέγχους καὶ ἀντιρρήσεις τῶν ἐναντίων ἡμῖν λόγων (p.e. 1.3,4).

[12] S. Price, *Latin Christian Apologetic. Minucius Felix, Tertullian, and Cyprian* in: Edwards et al. (eds.), 1999, 105-129 insists on this 'exoteric' criterion as essential for a work to be classed as 'apologetic'. This makes good sense, as it stays close to the context of the defence speech before a judge or jury, though we should note that such address to outsiders may be a fiction constructed by the text. But it is possible to argue that this second criterion is not essential to the notion of 'apologetic'.

by this strategy of defence is it suitable to describe it as an *apology* in the proper sense. In the nature of the case, works that are primarily apologetic (as defined above) are likely to contain elements of *polemics* and *encomium* (propaganda). As rhetoricians recognized, an effective method of self-defence is to go onto the offensive against one's accusers, such that apologetic will often *include* invective (though not all invective is 'apologetic'). It was also recognized that to stand always on the back foot, defending oneself against criticism, could be seen as a sign of weakness; sometimes it was appropriate to take a more positive stance and to promote or eulogize what the opposition had attempted to denigrate.[13] Thus, although *apology* and *encomium* were distinct rhetorical genres, as part of a total apologetic strategy it is not at all surprising to find defenders of a cause waxing lyrical on whatever was under attack.[14]

With these observations, and on the basis of this definition, we may conclude that *Apion*, as analysed above, is a prime example of an *apology*. That it contains polemics and an extended passage whose content is most like an encomium (2.145-286) is no obstacle to this classification. The work as a whole is placed within the framework of, and dominated by, defence against explicit accusations (and slurs), and is directed, at the rhetorical level, at *outsiders* (1.3; 2.296).

2. Ancient Parallels?

I have not said anything so far about ancient examples of *apology*, the only basis on which any generic classification can be built. But I wish to discuss that matter in connection with another, namely whether there is anything quite like Josephus' *Contra Apionem* known to us from antiquity.

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[13] See again, Demosth., cor. 3f.; cf. Quint., inst. 5.13,53 (first refute the opposition, then present one's own case). Plato's *Apology* spends as much time advocating Socrates' philosophy as defending him against charges. Josephus reports the combination of 'apology' and 'encomium' in Nicolas' account of the life of Herod (Ant. 16.86).

[14] Conversely, an encomium could contain many elements of apologetic; Isocrates complained that Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* would be better termed an 'apology' (hel. 10.14).

The rhetorical genre of *apology* (ἀπολογία) arises from the legal defence-speech, the response of the accused to the charges or suspicions raised by the prosecution.[15] From here it entered into literature and became a *literary* genre both by straight transference (defence speeches written up as literary works, such as those of Demosthenes, Cicero, and Apuleius) and by imitation (e.g., Lysias' artificial defence speeches; Isocrates, *Antidosis*). Plato's hugely influential *Apology* also demonstrated how a legal defence speech could be expanded and manipulated into a wider defence of a (philosophical) way of life, as much positive promotion of a cause as negative refutation of its detractors. Later philosophical debates also spawned many passages of defence, where beliefs, practices and personalities were the target of philosophical attack, and philosophical defence (e.g. for and against Epicurus and Epicureanism). Given the popularity of forensic rhetoric as a form of entertainment, and as a training exercise for budding orators, it is not surprising that set-piece defence speeches found their way into numerous literary genres, including historical narratives and novels.[16]

From its origin in this legal setting, the apologetic genre (direct response to accusations) could encompass not just legal charges, but also slurs, insults, and slanders, and it could be applied to contexts where what was at stake was not just the legal standing of the debaters but, more broadly, their honour. Even in legal contexts, reference to *charges* (κατηγορίαι or αἰτίαι) was often juxtaposed with mention of *slanders* (βλασφημίαι), *insults* (λοιδορίαι), and *li-*

[15] See the definition and discussion in Ps.-Aristotle [Anaximenes], rhet. alex. 1426b 22 - 1427b 11. The question here is not whether *Apion* precisely fits a standard category, but the extent to which it participates in, and expands, the tradition of 'apologetics' established in rhetorical and literary practice.

[16] For a survey, see F. Veltman, *The Defense Speeches of Paul in Acts*, in: C.H. Talbert (ed.), *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, Edinburgh 1978, 243-256; there are examples in Acts, in Chariton, *Chaereas*, and in Josephus, *Antiquitates* (e.g., Ant. 16.100-126). See further K. Berger, *Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament*, in: ANRW 2.25,2 (1984), 1031-1432 (1287-1291), with discussion of apologetic letters, defined by Demetrius as "that which adduces, with proof, arguments that contradict charges that are being made" (cited in S. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, Philadelphia 1986, 167).

bels (διαβολαί),[17] and in non-legal contexts all such terms could be mixed. While *individuals* might defend their reputation in apologetic mode (e.g., Isocrates, Antidosis), the genre was also influential on the way that *city-states* competed for honour. In introducing his response to Manetho, Chaeremon and Lysimachus, Josephus explicitly places his work in the context of the polemics of the ancient world, particularly those between Greek city-states:

> That the same thing has happened to many others, through the malice of some, will be familiar, I think, to those who read more in the way of historical works (αἱ ἱστορίαι). For certain people have attempted to besmirch the nobility of nations and of the most renowned cities, and to insult their constitutions - Theopompus on the Athenians' constitution, Polycrates on the Lacedaemonians', while the author of the *Tripoliticos* (who was certainly not Theopompos, as some think) savaged the Thebans' city as well, and indeed Timaeus in his histories issued many slanders about the above-named and others (1.220f.).

Josephus here cites examples only of inter-state *criticisms*, not of apologetic responses, but he gives us a clue where to look for such. If we were to explore the rhetorical products of the rivalries between Greek city-states, we would indeed find numerous cases of self-promotion that also defend the relevant city against slurs and accusations. Thus Isocrates' panegyric on Athens rebuts Spartan accusations against the Athenian empire, and in an extended comparison with Sparta levels charges against Sparta in return (*panath.* 37; 61-73; 88-111). Dionysius of Halicarnassus opens his eulogy of the city of Rome with reference to hostile claims that it was founded by barbarians and vagabonds (*ant. rom.* 1.4,2; 1.5,2f.; cf. 1.89,1) - claims that he rebuts with a long al-

[17] E.g., Demosth., cor. 3-8; Ps.-Aristotle [Anaximenes], rhet. alex. 1436b - 1438a. Within a Josephan defence speech (Ant. 16.100-126), note the juxtaposition of αἰτία (16.100; 16.104; 16.117; 16.119), ἐλέγχειν (16.101; 16.111) and διαβολή (16.101; 16.108; 16.112; 16.113; 16.121; 16.134); cf. Apion 1.53 (κατηγορία καὶ διαβολή).

ternative narrative.[18] Similar apologetic elements appear in Aristides' defence of Athens (*or.* 1.282; 1.302-312). In this extended, non-legal, sense, 'apologetic' seems a suitable label for such explicit and direct response to rhetorical assault, although in all these works it is only one element within a larger (encomiastic) whole, not the defining characteristic of the text as a whole.

What makes Josephus' *Apion* unique, as far as I know, is that it defends the *politeia* of a whole ethnic group (not just a city-state), and, more importantly, that the *whole work* is constituted in this form: it does not just *contain* an apology, but *is* one. It is, I think, the only known example of such inter-state rivalry that is *dominated* by this defensive stance and classifiable, as a text, as an *apology*. Since it comes on the heels of Josephus' *Antiquitates*, which it explicitly supplements, we may say that, as a package, Josephus' work is far more than merely *apology*, but it is still remarkable to find a whole treatise in this form.[19] We know of no Judean precursor: none of the fragments of Philo sometimes mentioned in this connection would fit our definition of *apology*.[20] Of early Christian works, the closest

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[18] See D.L. Balch, *Two Apologetic Encomia. Dionysius on Rome and Josephus on the Jews*, in: JSJ 13 (1982), 102-122, though he exaggerates the extent to which this account of Rome's origins is apologetic. Apart from this opening comment, references to critics of Rome are extremely rare (cf. 2.8,3f.).

[19] One could speculate why: would it have appeared a sign of weakness to spend so much time refuting accusations against one's city or nation? The appearance of whole texts dominated by this strategy, such as *Apion* and some later Christian examples, may be a reflection of the vulnerability of the causes they represent.

[20] We know nothing about the work Eusebius entitles *On Behalf of Judeans* (h.e. 2.18,6). Eusebius introduces a passage from Philo on the Essenes (p.e. 8.11,1) as derived from his "apology on behalf of the Judeans" (8.10,19), but nothing in the text cited even remotely fits the genre (there is no mention of criticisms at all). Fragments from the *Hypothetica* are introduced by the claim that Philo makes this argument "on behalf of Judeans as if towards their accusers" (ὑπὲρ Ἰουδαίων ὡς πρὸς κατηγόρους αὐτῶν, p.e. 8.5,11), but this may be Eusebius' own loose categorization of the work. The fragments themselves display a *diatribe* style (raising possible objections in the form of "you may say" or "you may ask", e.g., 6.2; 7.11). There is one report of insults against Moses (6:2), but the author does not speak as an advocate of the Judeans (they are spoken of in the third person, not the first),

parallel is Origen's *Contra Celsum*, in its direct rebuttal of specific accusations, though the classification of such texts is a controversial matter, their purposes often clearer than their genre.

3. Josephus' Apologetic Strategies

Apologetics is an intricate rhetorical exercise, requiring considerable skills in outmanoeuvring one's opponents and presenting one's own case in terms acceptable and attractive to others. But it is also, and perhaps more interestingly, a complex intellectual phenomenon, involving careful negotiation of presuppositions and values. When this takes place, as with Josephus, across cultural boundaries, we can observe a calculated exercise in cultural self-positioning and self-representation, in which competing regimes of truth or value are juxtaposed, combined, contrasted or melded into something entirely new. I wish to explore some aspects of this phenomenon by distinguishing three moments or moves in the apologetic dynamic of the text - distinguished for the purposes of analysis, though in practice often combined.

3.1.

The first apologetic move I will label 'squeezing oneself into the other's mould' (or, more prosaically, self-adaptation). Here the apologete responds to accusations, slurs or doubts by fitting his / her cause into the terms, the categories or the paradigms of the opponent. Doubts have been raised, Josephus says, about the antiquity of the Judean people, by those who say it must be of recent origin, since "it was not thought worthy of any mention by the most renowned Greek historians" (1.2). Josephus might have dismissed this out of hand, and he does, in fact, enter into a long assault on Greeks for their comparative ignorance of ancient history (1.6-56). But he also accommodates the

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and the work does not seem to be structured or dominated by response to criticism. The genre is that of a philosophical dialogue, not an apology. See K. Keeble, *A Critical Study of Flavius Josephus Contra Apionem*, M.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1991, 44-52; M. Goodman, *Josephus' Treatise* Against Apion, in: Edwards et al. (eds.), 1999, 45-58, suggesting that Josephus' *Apion* is not typical of a lost genre, but specific to its historical context in Rome. On the authorship of the *Hypothetica*, see Barclay, 2006, 353-355.

objection by offering, in a lengthy section, no less that seven Greek *witnesses* to Judean antiquity (1.161-214), and even in the case of the other *witnesses* cited (Egyptian, Phoenician, and Chaldean), is careful to justify their inclusion at least partly on the grounds that *the Greeks* recognize such peoples as "the most trustworthy on ancient history as a whole" (1.4). In this context, to point only to Judean sources, as he mostly did in his earlier *Antiquitates*, would have cut no argumentative ice: he has to accommodate at least partly the 'authority' of others' cultural traditions, even if, in the process, he has to 'discover' references to Judeans and their history that were not widely recognised to be such (e.g., Manetho and the Hyksos; Choerilus and the tonsured warriors from the „Solyman" hills). In the same way, when responding to Apion, Josephus fits his argument to Apion's political preferences. Where Apion had accused the Judeans in Alexandria of political insubordination, opposing a lawful Ptolemaic king and snubbing Roman authority, Josephus composes a long narrative of support for the legitimate Ptolemaic line, and wholehearted respect for Roman emperors (2.33-78). This is not just a question of denying a charge by proving the opposite; it is about the political alignment of Judeans in the Eastern Mediterranean and, by implication, in the Roman empire of Josephus' day. Josephus cannot *afford* to say that Judeans have undermined the Ptolemaic regime, or that they dispute Roman claims to divine legitimacy. However well it does or does not fit historical reality, and however truly it represents his own personal opinions, he squeezes his tradition into Apion's political mould for apologetic purposes.

As a third example of the same, we may note his presentation of the Judean 'constitution' (2.145-286). Even to present the Judean tradition as a 'constitution' is already to move onto non-native terrain, although in this case terrain comfortably occupied by Judeans for some time before Josephus. More striking is the comparison between Moses and ancient Greek legislators (Solon, Lycurgus, Zaleukos) who differ only in their comparative age (though this is, for apologetic reasons, a *crucial* difference), not, as we might expect, because one speaks revelation from God, while the others make up human laws (2.151-162). If Moses' constitution makes the Judeans tougher than the Spartans and more consistent than the Athenians in disseminating knowledge of the law, such apologetic compari-

sons are built *within the frame* of the object of comparison, not in a different cultural mould. The careful reader will find all the *virtues* instilled by the Mosaic constitution to be shaped by the Greek philosophical tradition, and even the laws and the philosophical tenets about God closely aligned to the Hellenistic and / or the Roman traditions. Where Apollonius Molon accused Judeans of being "atheists" and "misanthropes," Josephus proves that they are exemplary in piety (2.151-189) and models of openness to outsiders (2.255-268). Whence did the latter become a necessary Judean virtue? It is clear that the apologetic agenda has required it to become so.

3.2.

The second *move* is bound up with the first, but takes it in a more aggressive direction. Josephus wants to do more than prove that his tradition is inoffensive, culturally and politically. He also wants to demonstrate the supremacy or superiority of the Judean tradition. This second move we could call 'siphoning off the cultural resources of others' (or, to be more prosaic, transculturation).

In terms of form, Josephus' *Apion* cleverly uses a battery of rhetorical and literary weapons to fight its apologetic battles, all derived from the Greek tradition. Among the most striking examples are the long passages refuting the Egyptian accounts of the 'exodus' as relayed by Manetho, Chaeremon and Lysimachus (1.227-320). We might imagine Josephus refuting these stories by simply asserting, against them, that the biblical account is true, and theirs false. As we shall see, he has theological reasons to think that necessarily true, but such a strategy would have had little persuasive effect. Instead, he attacks the Egyptian stories on internal grounds - they are self-contradictory (both internally, and among each other), and they contain numerous implausibilities, time and again narrating actions that just don't make sense. The *sense* in view, of course, is not Egyptian (the cultural logic of the original stories) nor Judean, but that developed in Greek rationality, with its own assumptions of how reasonable people behave: in this case, Josephus can ridicule the actions of the Egyptian seer, Amenophis (1.232-236), or the Egyptian king of the same name (1.243-247; 1.254-265). This is a beautiful example of Greek literary criticism - so beautiful, in fact, that some have suspected Josephus of plagiarising a previous Hellenistic cri-

tique of Manetho.[21] We do not need to doubt Josephan authorship: Josephus has learned to use others' weapons, and to employ them, in attack and defence, to advance the Judean cause.

Elsewhere, there are striking examples of Josephus' use of Greek tools to advance not just the equivalence but the superiority of the Judean tradition. Sometimes he is explicit about this. In defending Jews / Judeans against the charge that they are intolerant of others' opinions about the Gods, he turns on the offensive against Greek mythology (2.236-254), and draws in, as allies, "those among the Greeks admired for their wisdom" (2.239; 2.242; 2.255). Almost all his statements and critiques here are built on the Greek philosophical tradition, but - and this is crucial - Josephus does not admit this to be Judean dependence on Greek philosophy, since he continually advances the claim (never proved) that *Greek philosophers*, by contrast, were dependent for their theology on *Moses* (2.168; 2.281, etc.). In a different but closely related tactic, Josephus lines Moses' constitution up against the other forms of constitution adopted by other nations - monarchy, oligarchy and democracy (2.164). He might have identified Moses' constitution as a species within one or other of these *genera* - a tactic he employs in *Antiquitates*. Instead, he creates a new *genus*, called "theocracy", a term he has coined and which points, he suggests, to a quite superior form of constitution, although its contents are, on closer scrutiny, not significantly different from the philosophical ideals of Plato and Cicero, putting God (however defined) at the head of the legal structure.

One further example before we move to our final category of apologetic strategy. Josephus knows the famous Athenian claim that their city was, in contrast to Sparta, "common to all" (κοινή, 1.262; cf. Thucydides 2.39,1). In a very clever move, with the charge that Jews were "antisocial" clearly in mind, Josephus quietly transfers this boast to Jerusalem, and speaks of the temple as "one temple of the one God - for like is always attracted to like - common to all people as belonging to the common God of all" (2.193). Here the very particularity of the Judean tradition - its focus in the one place and the one sanctuary (at least in theory), and its claim to focus the only proper worship of the one God - is explained and extolled in

[21] See Barclay, 2006, no. 879 to 1252.

very Athenian terms. The prestige attaching to the Periclean boast is here siphoned off into praise of the Jerusalem temple and the Judean cult. Josephus thus uses Greek resources not to show that Jews are little Greeks from Judea, but that they are the original model and the supreme exemplar of all the most important and honourable features of the Greek (and Roman) traditions.

3.3.

The third apologetic move I wish to highlight we might call 'bending the canons of knowledge and truth' (or, in postcolonial terms, the distorting and subversive effects of *hybridity*). The best example I can point to here comes in the early discussion of historiography in Part One. The question that Josephus raises in this discussion concerns cultural authority: why should *renowned* Greek judgments on antiquity be taken to be true? Why should Greeks be allowed to determine what is *significant* enough to mention? Who decides which are the *reliable* sources for history? More fundamentally, what are the appropriate frameworks, paradigms, and methods of historiography, and is the Greek regime of truth (acquired through critical scrutiny, comparison, and sifting of sources) superior or inferior to the Judean reliance on authoritative Scriptural narratives?

The power dynamics of this engagement are made complex by the fact that the *Greek* tradition to which he responds was already, in Josephus' day, expropriated and relativized by the Roman empire, and was in some senses itself another colonized culture.[22] The ground from which Josephus assaults "the Greeks" is thus not as dangerous as at first appears: he has allies in the Roman tradition who could afford, when it suited, to be just as dismissive of the Greeks. Positioning himself outside the Greek tradition and among "barbarians" (1.8,58), Josephus overturns Greek presumptions of superiority without placing Judeans in isolation. The delicate ways in which he refers to the recent Judean Revolt against Rome (1.34,46), and his tactful references to theatre-martyrdoms (avoiding mention of the Romans who used these deaths for public entertainment, 1.43),

[22] S. Goldhill (ed.), *Being Greek under Rome. Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire*, Cambridge 2001.

suggest an effort to enable an implicit alliance between Roman and Judean perspectives on the topics under discussion.

But Josephus' stance towards the Greek tradition is not simply that of an external critic. Subtly insinuating himself into centuries-old debates,[23] Josephus exploits the fissures of Greek internal disagreement, turning limited differences among Greek historians into fundamental critiques, and placing the Greek habit of self-reflexive criticism into a new and more damaging framework by deploying it, as a non-Greek, against the whole Greek tradition. Josephus' most polemical passages have their foundation in motifs with a long Greek pedigree: he silently uses Herodotus, Thucydides and Plato (1.8-14), even while ridiculing the tradition to which they belong. But the full dimensions of this skilful transculturation are not apparent until Josephus turns from his critical to his constructive argument at 1.28. At first the greater Judean care for "records" (1.28f.) might look like a simple claim to outperform the Greeks on their own ground, but it slowly emerges that Josephus is operating by a distinctive "philosophy" (1.54) which is not the same as Greek "wisdom" (1.52). The most crucial statement of this alternative ideology is the description of Judean scriptures in 1.37-41, which stresses not only the harmony and accuracy of such sources, but also their *necessarily* unchallengeable authority, based on the inspiration of God accorded to Moses and the prophets ("the prophets alone learned by inspiration from God what had happened in the distant and more ancient past and recorded plainly events in their own time just as they had occurred", 1.37). The emphasis here on "learning" (μανθάνω) as the proper mode of knowledge (rather than scrutiny and challenge) betokens a distinctively Judean regime of truth, which substitutes submission to divine authority for the ideology of control prevalent in Greek discussions of historiography.

By inserting these special claims into an otherwise standard discussion of the rules of history, Josephus creates a special form of 'hybridity' which does not simply add to, but subtly destabilizes the historiographical tradition to which he contributes.[24] Josephus does not present Judean culture as a wholly alien tradition: he does

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[23] S. Schäublin, *Josephus und die Griechen*, in: Hermes 110 (1982), 316-341.

[24] H.K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London 1994.

not invert Greek claims completely, nor criticise the Greeks for their failure to produce authoritative 'prophets'. But neither is his stance unambiguously mimetic, forcing the Judean tradition to compete on purely *Greek* terms. His strategy is more subtle and, potentially, more threatening to the mainstream tradition: by introducing a different historiographical logic, he disturbs the rules by which *truth* is normally discerned and decided. This is no mere embedding of Judean culture within a majority discourse, or even a simple 'fusion' of two compatible traditions. By inserting distinctively Judean claims into the long-running debates of the Greco-Roman world, Josephus introduces a different canon of authority and a subtly different understanding of the task of the historian.

Here apologetic subtly changes the terms of the discourse which it enters, and creates a new, doubled or in-between, discourse that has the capacity to change both traditions here brought into engagement. This was a strategy which early Christianity subsequently learned to deploy in order to crack open the authority of the Greco-Roman intellectual tradition, with enormous consequences for western history. Josephus provides a fascinating example of this strategy, used for his own purposes; further analysis of his apologetics at this level could certainly yield rich results.

Ritus ad solos digitos pertinens (Lact., inst. 5.19,29):

A Caricature of Roman Civic Religion in Lactantius' Institutiones divinae[1]

Maijastina Kahlos

Non sunt ad caelum elevandae manus nec exorandus aedituus
ut nos ad aurem simulacri, quasi magis exaudiri possimus,
admittat: prope est a te deus, tecum est, intus est.

There is no need to lift our hands heavenwards,
nor to beg admission by the temple-keeper
to the ear of a divine likeness in order for our prayer to be heard.
God is close to you, with you, within you.

Sen., ep. 41.1

Alongside Arnobius, Lactantius has been one of the most neglected Latin apologists in the modern patristic studies.[2] However, interest in Lactantius and particularly his *Institutiones divinae* has revived

[1] I wish to thank the participants of the conference *Jews, Christians and Pagans in Antiquity - Critique and Apologetic* in Aarhus in 2007 for the inspiring discussion on my paper and Dr. Marja-Leena Hänninen (University of Helsinki) for her valuable comments on Roman religion.

[2] The neglect has been lamented, e.g., by E. DePalma Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius & Rome*, Ithaca 1999, 13f. and M. Edwards, *The Flowering of Latin Apologetic: Lactantius and Arnobius*, in: M. Edwards / M. Goodman / S. Price / C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, Oxford 1999, 197-221 (197).

since the 1980s and, consequently, he has emerged as an intriguing thinker of an important transition era from Emperor Diocletian to Constantine.[3]

Lactantius wrote the seven books of his *Institutiones divinae* to defend and explain Christianity.[4] One method of his defence was to make an assault, and subsequently, he attacked Greco-Roman traditions - principally religious beliefs, customs and institutions, but also literature, philosophy and Roman concepts of justice.

In this article I will discuss Lactantius' attack against Roman civic religion that is part of his overall attack against Greco-Roman religious traditions - usually termed paganism by him. By 'Roman civic religion' I here mean those cults of the gods that were integrated into the 'state' religion of the Empire, for example, the cult of Vesta, the cult of the Capitoline triad (Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, Iuno, Minerva) and the imperial cult. This excludes, for example, the cults of Mithras or Isis and numerous ethnic and local religions, such as Judaism and the cults of the Celts.[5] My analysis is divided into two main sections. In the first three chapters, I survey some general features of his criticism while, in the final chapter, I take a closer look in his assault on Roman religious life in inst. 5.19.

1. Lactantius' Criticism in General

First, it is characteristic of Lactantius as well as other Christian writers both before and after him that they lumped the vast variety of polytheistic religions together under a single blanket term. Lactantius refers to these religions as *religiones deorum* or *superstí-*

[3] Lucius Caecilius (or Caelius) Firmianus Lactantius (c. 250 - c. 325) was brought up in North Africa and educated in a town called Sicca Veneria. He left North Africa to serve as a teacher of rhetoric in Nicomedia, Bithynia, the seat of Emperor Diocletian. Lactantius was converted to Christianity perhaps about 300 and witnessed the oppressive imperial policies against Christians. However, he remained as a teacher of rhetoric until c. 305-306 when Emperor Galerius started closing schools.

[4] *Institutiones divinae* was written between 303-313 and re-edited around 321-323. Book 5 was originally written as a separate work in 306.

[5] The term civic cults or civic religion is used, e.g., by J.B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, Malden 2007, 110-116. M. Beard / J. North / S. Price (eds.), *Religions of Rome I: A History*, Cambridge 1998, 249-251 speak of official cults of Rome.

tio deorum,[6] and the adherents of these religions as *cultores deorum*, and treats them as a whole.[7] As we all know, there was never a homogeneous religion called paganism but rather a wide range of various cults and beliefs, practices and attitudes.[8] However, it was opportune and practical for Christian polemicists to bundle their religious rivals together. This turned out to be an efficient rhetorical strategy, since it was far easier to strike a single blow at one target than try to attack one's opponents one by one.

The advantages of the strategy of grouping all non-Christian cults together are seen, for instance, in Lactantius' argumentation in Book 1 where he bundles different rituals together as either horrific, obscene or ridiculous, including the human sacrifices of the Roman past and human sacrifices by the Celts, castrations in honour of Magna Mater and mutilations in honour of Bellona, the rituals in honour of Isis and those in honour of Priapus and even some primeval Roman rituals by the *Salii* and the *Luperci*.[9] Thus, Lactantius takes historically, culturally, geographically and ethnically disparate rituals altogether to represent a single unit, paganism. The human sacrifices from the Roman past are meant to embarrass contemporary Roman readers.

In their polemic against polytheistic cults, Christian writers focused on those gods and rituals that, in their sexual carnevalism, were an easy target for defamation and probably quite an uncomfortable issue for many Romans themselves. Priapus, with his phallus cult, was among these embarrassing cults. In Lactantius' attack, the castrates, *galli*, of Magna Mater are intended to discomfit many Romans who

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[6] Lact., inst. 5.19,29: *superstitio illorum deorum*.

[7] Lact., inst. 1.5,6. A similar conflation is seen, e.g., in Prud., c. Symm. 1.42-226.

[8] For the birth of paganism, see M. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian Rhetorical Strategies against Pagans in the Roman West, c. 380-430*, Aldershot 2007, 18-26.

[9] Lact., inst. 1.21. The rituals of the *Salii* and the *Luperci*: Lact., inst. 1.21,45. In the Roman self-understanding, human sacrifices were regarded as utterly un-Roman; e.g. Livy (22.57,6) stresses that the human sacrifices made during the second Punic War were *minime Romano sacro*. For the suspicious and ambiguous Roman attitudes towards the ceremonies and cult officials of Magna Mater, see M. Beard / J. North / S. Price (eds.), *Religions of Rome II: A Sourcebook*, Cambridge 1998, 209f.

disapproved of them. The cult of Magna Mater and Attis with the castrated *galli* priests was a recurrent theme in Christian assaults.[10]

In Book 1 *De falsa religione*, Lactantius' assaults are targeted against the anthropomorphism, anthropopathy and immorality of the gods. Lactantius aims at articulating a clear divergence between polytheistic and Christian conceptions of deity and downplaying any possible similarities in these ideas. For instance, he asserts that pagans describe their gods as born of a pairing of the sexes and, consequently, contrasts the difference of sex, copulation and procreation of pagan gods with the incomprehensibility and ineffability of the Christian God.[11] Furthermore, Lactantius draws attention to the debaucheries, rapes, adulteries and parricides of such deities as Hercules, Apollo, Mars, Mercury, Liber Pater and particularly Jupiter.[12] These kinds of attacks were the substance of second and third century Christian apologetic, for example, early Greek apologetic (Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria) and Tertullian.[13] Christian apologists employed the critique of myth used by Greek and Roman philosophers who had scoffed at the sacred tales in which gods with human passions and vices committed adultery, stole and deceived one another. The sexual promiscuity of pagan gods is the most prominent theme in Christian myth critique. Most assaults are aimed at Jupiter, culpable of adultery, incest and paedophilia.[14]

Lactantius also attacks the multitude of gods. In Book 1, a considerable part of the discussion is dedicated to the contraposition of the plurality of gods with the singleness of the true God of Christianity. He constructs and polarizes a clear difference between mono-

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[10] There are similar attacks, e.g. in Augustine's *City of God* (2.4; 7.26).

[11] Lact., inst. 1.8.

[12] Lact., inst. 1.9-1.11.

[13] According to Tertullian (nat. 2.7), pagan literature and higher erudition was based on the immorality of the gods. See also Arist., apol. 8-11; Athenag., leg. 21; Tat., prat. 8; Theoph., Autol. 1.9; 2.5; 2.7; Arnob., nat. 3.25; 4.26-29; 6.22.

[14] Xenophan., fr. 11 (Diels - Kranz 21 B 11). Xenophanes was highly regarded by Christian writers who quoted his statements, e.g., by Clement of Alexandria who is the principal source of Xenophanes' fragments (str. 5.109,1; 7.22,1).

theistic Christianity and polytheistic paganism.[15] The multitude of gods was a recurring theme in Christian apologetic in which the multitude of the pagan gods was stressed while the singleness of the one Christian God was highlighted.[16] To clarify the difference, Christian writers emphatically define their God as the one and only God and other deities as false gods or even demons.

One of the rhetorical techniques used is the setting up of a straw man, that is, a caricatured or extreme version of the antagonist's arguments, simplifying and twisting the opposing views into a feeble construction that is easy to contest, ridicule and refute. The straw man set up by Lactantius here is mainly based on literary material derived from Cicero, Varro and Roman poets such as Vergil, Horace and Lucretius. Lactantius postulates that what he describes as contemporary paganism has remained the same since the times of Cicero and Varro.[17]

In Lactantius' attack, Roman religion is construed as both orgiastic and rigid. On one hand, Roman religion is depicted as filled with disgraceful and licentious gods and rituals, on the other hand it is labelled as rigid and consisting of outward forms without inner feelings and content. I shall now briefly discuss the shameful side depicted in Book 1, and return to the "outwardness" in the second part of my article, when discussing Book 5.

In Book 1, after discussing the cults of gods in general, Lactantius turns to the Roman rituals proper (*proprias Romanorum religiones*).[18] He describes Roman religion as dishonourable and decadent. He labels Roman goddesses such as Acca Larentia, Faula (or Fauna) and

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[15] Digeser 1999, 39, connects the construction and polarization of monotheistic Christianity and polytheistic paganism with Lactantius' attempt to "sully the luster of the Jovians and Herculians by pulling the tetrarchy away from its more monotheistic associations and tying it firmly to traditional polytheism."

[16] E.g., Augustine throughout his *City of God* (e.g., in civ. 8.12). In earlier apologetics: e.g., Theoph., Autol. 2.38; Tert., idol. 1.5.

[17] The material that Varro used in Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum was antiquarian already in his own time: for Varro, see B. Cardauns, *Varro und die römische Religion, zur Theologie. Wirkungsgeschichte und Leistung der 'Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum'*, in: ANRW 2.16,1 (1978), 80-103.

[18] Lact., inst. 1.20,1.

Flora as former prostitutes who had merely been deified as goddesses. He also reports on the obscenity of the *Floralia* festival.[19] The branding of goddesses as women of infamy was routine in earlier Latin apologetic (for instance in Tertullian's writings). Flora was a favourite object of Christian slander: performances connected with her cult were an apposite target for rebuke and ridicule.[20]

Irony and ridicule were regular weapons in the Christian polemic against pagans. Rival religious beliefs were represented as ridiculous and distorted. One way to ridicule and embarrass the opponent was to introduce the most obscure or preposterous deities of the Roman religious tradition. Lactantius lists deities such as Cloacina (protectress of sewers), Pavor (fear), Pallor (paleness); abstract deities like Honor (honour), Virtus (virtue), Mens (mind) and Amor (love); Robigo (blight), Febris (fever), Venus Calva (bald Venus), Iuppiter Pistor (Jupiter the baker), Fornax (oven), Muta (silence), Lara (or Larunda, the mother of the Lares), Caca (the sister of Cacus, or dung), Cunina (protectress of infants), Stercutus (inventor of manuring), Tutinus (deity needed in sexual intercourse) and finally Terminus (ending). By mentioning these deities, Lactantius aims at embarrassing Romans and subjecting Roman polytheistic religion to ridicule.

Comparable mentions of bizarre and absurd-sounding deities had been used by earlier Christian apologists such as Tertullian and Minucius Felix.[21] Moreover, Augustine made a more or less similar list of gods in his *City of God*.[22] These obscure divinities of the Roman past were probably taken from Varro's antiquarian writings and they must have sounded almost as obscure to Varro's generation as to Tertullian's, Lactantius' or Augustine's contemporaries.

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[19] Lact., inst. 1.20,1-10.

[20] Flora in Christian polemic: Aug., civ. 2.27; Min. Fel., Oct. 25.8; Cyp., idol. 4.

[21] Min. Fel., Oct. 25.8; Tert., apol. 25.10; Tert., nat. 2.9,17.

[22] Aug., civ. 4.8; 4.34; also Aug., ep. 17.2.

2. Lactantius' History of Religions

In Book 2 *De origine erroris* Lactantius composes an account of the development of religions. We could call him a historian of religions since he wants to understand the origins of what he calls false religion or superstition or error.[23]

In Lactantius' narrative the original, authentic, religion of humankind is monotheism. Vergil is his witness for the golden age of humankind, the age of the original monotheistic religion before the corruption of the numerous false gods.[24] Eusebius of Caesarea also regards pure monotheism as the original and true form of cult that polytheism had corrupted but that would be restored in due course through Christianity.[25]

Lactantius explains the appearance of the cults of idols by means of both Euhemeristic argumentation and demonology. He explains the emergence of divinities with the ignorance of primeval people who deified their rulers and great men as gods.[26] Jupiter and Saturn, for example, were former kings who had been made gods after their deaths.[27] Thus, in his argumentation Lactantius follows the Euhemeristic theory of the origin of the gods recurrent in antiquity, using again the arsenal of Greco-Roman tradition in order to refute the gods of the very same tradition.[28] Christian apologists made am-

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[23] For Lactantius' views of development of religions, see J.-C. Fredouille, *Lactance historien des religions*, in: J. Fontaine / M. Perrin (eds.), *Lactance et son temps*, Paris 1978, 237-249 and O. Nicholson, *Civitas Quae Adhuc Sustentat Omnia. Lactantius and the City of Rome*, in: W.E. Klingshirn / M. Vessey (eds.), *The Limits of Ancient Christianity. Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus*, Ann Arbor 1999, 7-25 (18f.).

[24] Lact., inst. 5.6,13.

[25] E.g., Eus., p.e. 1.9. Christian writers speak of the progress of humankind towards the one God and acknowledge an original *scientia dei* innate in all humans. However, people have gone astray in making up numerous deities because of their bewildered awe but they could not be completely ignorant of divinity.

[26] Lactantius discusses the Euhemeristic interpretation in Books 1 and 2, particularly in Lact., inst. 1.6; 1.11-15; 1.18.

[27] Lact., inst. 1.11: Jupiter and Saturn.

[28] The Euhemeristic theory is named after the fourth century B.C.E. writer Euhemerus of Sicily who had stated that the gods were deified human rulers and benefactors. This theory was well known in Rome, since Euhemerus' tractate had been

ple use of this popular theory; Eusebius of Caesarea, for example, dedicated the last part of the first book of his *Praeparatio evangelica* to reinforcing Euhemeristic arguments and to showing that pagan gods were mortals. Tertullian also employed these arguments to refute Roman gods.[29]

Besides Euhemeristic arguments, Lactantius argues that the gods venerated by the Romans are in fact demons. Because they are demons, they are able to affect miracles in order to convince their worshippers. The demonization of opponents' beliefs and cults was one of the most extreme and prevailing techniques in the polemic between rivalling religions and consequently in Christian apologetic. The opponents were labelled as worshippers of demons and their gods were branded as fallen angels or demons under the direction of the devil. Christian writers regarded demons as relentlessly hostile and perfidious beings, and from the Christian perspective, all pagan cults could be regarded as a transaction with evil spirits and tantamount to magic.[30]

After refuting Roman religion as a deception in 2.8, Lactantius announces that he will proceed to discuss "the source and origin

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either translated or paraphrased into Latin by Ennius. Lactantius mentions Euhemerus and Ennius in inst. 1.11; 1.33f. In addition to Diodorus Siculus, Lactantius is the principal source for the Euhemeristic fragments.

[29] Tert., apol. 10.3; nat. 2.12; idol. 9.3. Other writers: Just., 1 apol. 21; Athenag., leg. 28-30; Arnob., nat. 4.25; 4.28f.; Min. Fel., Oct. 21.

[30] The term *daimon / daemon* had already been in Greco-Roman use but Christian authors began to use it with a divergent meaning. Justin (Just., 2 apol. 5; 1 apol. 5; 10; 14; 25; 54) regarded demons as fallen angels or as the descendants of fallen angels. For Tatian (Tat., or. 7.4f.; 7.24-8.3; 16f.; 19.5-9; 21.14-22.2) the pagan gods were demons and Zeus, their leader, the devil. For the history of the concept of *daimon / daemon*, see A. Klostergaard Petersen, *The Notion of Demon. Open Questions to a Diffuse Concept*, in: A. Lange (ed.), *Die Dämonen. Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchistlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt*, Tübingen 2003, 23-41 (24-26); L. Albinus, *The Greek daimon between Mythos and Logos*, A. Lange (ed.), Tübingen 2003, 425-446; J. ter Vrugt-Lentz, *Geister (Dämonen): B.II. Vorhellenistisches Griechenland*, in: RAC 9 (1976), 599-615 and C. Zintzen, *Geister (Dämonen): B.III.c. Hellenistische und kaiserzeitliche Philosophie*, in: RAC 9 (1976), 640-668.

of these evils", the devil.[31] This discussion is connected with his later treatment of the Roman gods as demons in 2.14 in which he explains the fall of angels and divides demons into two classes: those of heaven who were the fallen angels and those of the earth who were born from the fallen angels, being a kind of mixture of angels and humans. The latter were the wicked spirits whom pagans regarded as gods and worshipped in temples.[32] Lactantius lists several famous *prodigia* from the Roman gods such as Iuno Veiens, Fortuna Muliebris, Hercules, Jupiter and Minerva. With the help of miracles, demons misled humans to worship them with sacrifices.[33] Similarly, earlier apologists had emphasized the trickery of pagan demon-gods and their malicious motives.[34]

The third theme in Lactantius' analysis of the religion of gods is the emptiness of idols.[35] Lactantius' attack against idols follows the conventions of earlier apologetic in which the inefficiency of idols recurs *ad nauseam*. Greek apologists (e.g., Justin, Theophilus and Aristides) and Tertullian had ridiculed the cult of idols, empty, lifeless, human-made, material objects. Instead of protecting their worshippers, idols themselves had to be guarded.[36]

Correspondingly, Lactantius mocks people who adore either mortal things or things made by mortals that may be broken, burnt or destroyed. Even the Romans themselves despised their idols, as Horace in his satire mocked the statue of Priapus that had formerly

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[31] Lact., inst. 2.8. A quotation from Verg., Aen. 11.361: *caput horum et causa malorum.*

[32] Lact., inst. 2.14-16.

[33] Lact., inst. 2.16.

[34] E.g., Just., 2 apol. 5; 1. apol. 14: Athenag., leg. 26f.; Tat., orat. 8; 14; 16-18; Tert., apol. 22.4.

[35] Lact., inst. 2.17 sums up the attack against the errors of the religions of gods (*religiones deorum*) first with Euhemeristic arguments, second, with the emptiness of idols, and third, with the doctrine of demons.

[36] In earlier apologetic, e.g., Justin (1 apol. 9) announced that humans were protectors of gods; gods were not guardians of humans; Arnob., nat. 6.26 declared that gods could not take care of themselves and therefore needed the protection of laws; Aristid., apol. 3. The inefficiency of pagan gods a recurrent theme in the Old Testament (e.g., Jer 10:14f.; 16:19f.) and Jewish apologetic.

been the trunk of a fig tree, formed by a carpenter who had decided it was a god, frightful to thieves and birds.[37]
Lactantius ridicules the Romans who erred in adoring their gods such as Vulcanus, Vesta and Neptune as idols in human form. They then imagined that these idols were delighted with ornaments of gold, jewels and ivory, and they thought that there was no religion where the beauty and brilliance of these things did not shine. The Romans just thought that the gods loved the same things that they desired themselves.[38]

As part of his history of religions, Lactantius states that the original Roman religion had been imageless. The Roman imageless religion was that of the heaven, the sun, the earth and the sea before the corruption of religion with *simulacra*, temples, victims and odours.[39] The notion of an imageless Roman religion is connected with the ideas of Greek and Roman authors, Varro in particular[40], who had speculated on an original cult of elements without images, temples or sacrifices.[41]

3. Antiquity as an Argument

In the Greco-Roman discussion of religions, ancient writers regarded the antiquity of a religious tradition as its justification.[42] Christian apologists' approaches to the argument from antiquity were twofold.

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[37] Lact., inst. 2.4 with the quotation of Horace (sat. 1.8,1-4).

[38] Lact., inst. 2.6. Lactantius has earlier discussed the naturalistic interpretations of the gods as the elements and forces of nature and proceeds to discuss the error of the Romans in worshipping these elements and forces under as anthropomorphic gods such as Vulcanus, Vesta and Neptune.

[39] Lact., inst. 2.14.

[40] Augustine (civ. 4.31; 6.10; cf. 4.9) refers to Varro's ideas of the primeval Roman religion without images and compares the primordial Romans to the Jews. Christian authors, e.g., Clem., str. 1.15, explained the imageless Roman religion as influenced by Moses through the Pythagoreans.

[41] The idea of the primeval cult of elements without images appears in Christian writings, e.g., Eus., p.e. 1.9,13.

[42] For the prestige of the antiquity of tradition, see G. Clark, *'Translate into Greek. Porphyry of Tyre on the new barbarians'*, in: R. Miles (ed.), *Constructing Identities in*

On the one hand, Christian writers entered the contest for the title of the most ancient tradition and set out to prove that Christianity was older than any pagan tradition. Lactantius employs the argument from antiquity, for instance, at the end of Book 1, asserting that the worshippers of gods should not boast about the antiquity of their rites. He shows that their cults are not particularly old. In fact, the true religion, Christianity, predates them.[43]

On the other hand, Christian apologists questioned the authority of an age-old tradition. In Book 2 Lactantius refers to the *mos maiorum* of the Romans. He complains that

> the Romans persist stubbornly in maintaining and defending the religious traditions (*religiones*) that had been handed down by their forefathers (*a maioribus suis*). They did not question them on account of their nature but rather regarded them as tried and true only because the ancestors had conveyed them. So great is the authority of antiquity [...].[44]

But if the Romans prefer reason, which revealed the falseness of the gods, Lactantius asserts, they should abandon the traditions and authority of their ancestors.[45] In order to make the abandonment of the ancestral tradition easier, Lactantius reassesses the Roman forefathers. How could anyone, he implies, nowadays take seriously what the primeval *patres*, simple shepherds clothed in skins of ani-

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Late Antiquity, London 1999, 112-132.

[43] Lact., inst. 1.23,5: *Non ergo isti glorientur sacrorum vetustate quorum et origo et ratio et tempora deprehensa sunt.* It is important for Lactantius to show, for example, that Noah preceded Bacchus and even Saturn and Uranus (inst. 2.13,4). For other Christian apologists, too, Christian wisdom was far older than Greek philosophy and literature: e.g., Tat., orat. 31; Theoph., Autol. 3.16-30; Eus., p.e. 10.8. For uses of the argument from antiquity in Christian writings, see D. Ridings, *The Attic Moses. The Dependency Theme in Some Early Christian Writers*, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Göteborg 1995.

[44] Lact., inst. 2.6,7.

[45] Lact., inst. 2.6,7-12. Lactantius refers to the discussions in Cicero's *De natura deorum* 3.2,6.

mals, had instituted as the religious tradition?[46] The contemporary Romans thought it impossible that they themselves could be wiser than their forefathers, Lactantius exclaims, and compares them to a herd that is led by others.[47]

4. The Authority of Ancient Writers

Lactantius makes ample use of Roman authors, maintaining that the worshippers of gods are refuted not only by the truth, but even by their own words".[48]

In attacking pagan authoritative texts, Lactantius and other Christian writers seem to have challenged an argument from authority, but, in fact, they appealed to the very same texts as important evidence when these suited their argumentation. Were pagan authors used to build a bridge in a dialogue with non-Christians? Searching for a starting point in a persuasive dialogue was only one aspect of the deployment of pagan authors such as Euhemerus, Varro, Cicero, Seneca and even oracles. These writers were used as evidence for documenting the veracity of the Christian doctrine against the falsehoods of pagan religions and philosophies. Thus, the authorative texts of the pagan opponents were turned against them.

In Christian polemic, the arguments used in the Greco-Roman philosophical critique of religion were mobilized against the pagan gods. Lactantius based his argumentation partly on Roman writers such as Varro, Cicero and Seneca who themselves were critical of their own religious tradition. In their argumentation against pagan

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[46] Lact., inst. 2.6. Lactantius fortifies his ridicule of the Roman ancestors with a quotation from Propertius (4.1,13f; 11f.).

[47] Lact., inst. 2.7.

[48] Lact., inst. 2.6,42: *Non tantum igitur veritate, sed etiam verbis suis revincuntur.* Cf. Lact., inst. 5.4,6, where he states that pagans should be convinced by human testimonies so that their views would be refuted by their own authorities. For Lactantius' relationship to pagan literature, see E. Heck, *Lactanz und die Klassiker. Zu Theorie und Praxis der Verwendung heidnischer Literatur in christlicher Apologetik bei Lactanz*, in: Ph 132 (1988), 160-179; A. Wlosok, *Zur lateinischen Apologetik der constantinischen Zeit (Arnobius, Lactantius, Firmicus Maternus)*, in: Gym 96 (1989), 133-148 (138) and C. Rambaux, *Christianisme et paganisme dans le livre I des Institutions divines de Lactance*, in: REL 72 (1994), 159-176.

gods, Christian polemicists made use of the philosophical assessment of Greek and Roman writers who had questioned the religious practices of their own communities, the nature of gods and their myths. Thus, the Greco-Roman critique of religion offered a feasible arsenal of arguments against the pagan gods. Consequently, the exploitation of Greco-Roman discussion on their own gods was a recurrent feature in the apologetics of the second and third centuries.[49]

In Lactantius' treatment of Roman religion, Cicero, particularly his *De natura deorum*, is the most frequently quoted source. In Book 1, Lactantius refers to Cicero as his authority for Euhemeristic discussion.[50] Furthermore, he uses Cicero to show that the worshippers of gods themselves admitted that their religious system was flawed. He appeals to the authority and expertise of Cicero[51] who has refuted the gods of his own religion as false and fictitious and their cult as comparable to old wives' tales. (In fact, Cicero has the character of Balbus utter these words in *De natura deorum*).[52] Lactantius also seizes the passage in which Cicero (or rather, Cotta in *De natura deorum*) confesses that he can more easily say what is not than what is. Thus, Lactantius argues, Cicero understood what was false but did not know what was true.[53]

Lactantius' use of Cicero is an illustrative example of his attitude towards his literary opponents. He is ready to admit that Cicero was able to understand that the Roman religious system and gods are defective. Even though Cicero did not know the truth, he at least knew what was false. This is a certain kind of appreciation of the opponent and could lead to dialogue. However, Lactantius

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[49] E.g, Arnob., nat. 4.24-29. Just., 1 apol. 18 appeals to the teachings of Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato as well as to Homer and the oracles when discussing immortality and resurrection.

[50] E.g., Lact., inst. 1.11; 1.12; 1.13.

[51] Cicero is Romanae philosophiae princeps and amplissimo sacerdotio praeditus (Lact., inst. 1.17,3).

[52] Lact., inst. 1.17,3 quoting Cic., nat. deo. 2.28,70: *commenticios ac fictos deos [...] superstitiones paene aniles* (Balbus' words). Lactantius attributes the opinions represented in *De natura deorum* to Cicero even though they are the varying and dissenting opinions of the interlocutors of the dialogue.

[53] Lact., inst. 1.17,4 quoting Cic., nat. deo. 1.21,60 (Cotta's words).

uses this to strike his opponents even harder. "Although the learned Romans understood the vanity of their religion, they nonetheless - because of some perversity - persisted in the worship of the very same things that they condemned". Cicero is an example of these learned Romans whom Lactantius blames. Disparaging Cicero is of course one method of attacking his own pagan contemporaries. Cicero does not make use of his own wisdom but irresponsibly only continues the error, thus helping other people to remain blind and to stumble. To understand one's error and still continue to go astray willingly and consciously - as the learned elite does - is even worse than to be captivated and delighted in futile religious rites and incapable of pondering things (as the ignorant masses are).[54]

Lactantius appeals to other Roman writers as well. Vergil is used as the witness for the golden age of humankind in which the original monotheistic religion existed before the corruption of polytheism.[55] Lactantius refers to Seneca to reinforce, for instance, his ridicule of the anthropomorphic gods[56] and the folly of ceremonies.[57] Horace is also used to mock the obscurities of Roman religion, as the above-mentioned quotation on Priapus shows. Lactantius uses even Lucretius to strengthen his own arguments, for example, at the end of Book 1 in which he discusses different ceremonies and quotes Lucretius' verses on the foolish minds of humans and their blinded breasts.[58]

5. Inst. 5.19 against Roman Religion

I have made some general remarks of Lactantius' rhetorical techniques and themes concerning his attack against Roman civic religion. Let us take a closer look on his depiction of Roman religion in chapter 5.19. In Book 5 *De iustitia* Lactantius discusses the premises of universal peace and true justice and attacks the persecutors of

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[54] Lact., inst. 2.3,1-9. Cf. Augustine's censure of Porphyry in *City of God.*

[55] Lact., inst. 5.6,13.

[56] Lact., inst. 1.16: Seneca mocks the sexes of the gods.

[57] Lact., inst. 2.4.

[58] Lact., inst. 1.21,48, quoting Lucr., rer. nat. 2.14-16: *O miseras hominum mentes, o pectora caeca! / Qualibus in tenebris vitae quantisque periclis / degitur hoc aevi quodcumque est!*

Christians.[59] In 5.19 Lactantius discusses the uselessness and ineffectiveness of religious oppression and makes his famous appeal for religious tolerance, or what he calls *patientia*, patience.[60]

Lactantius blames ignorant pagans for believing that they could lead all people to their religion through persecution. "Do they then strive to achieve this by conversation or giving some reasoning? By no means; instead, they try to achieve this by force and tortures (*vi atque tormentis*)."[61] He urges pagans to use persuasion and argumentation instead of oppression and violence: "since they can achieve nothing by violence (for the religion of God is increased the more it is oppressed), let them rather act by the use of reason and exhortations." Therefore, he advises pagans to introduce their religion as a counterpart to the religion of Christians. "Besides this, if they have any confidence in philosophy or in eloquence, let them arm themselves and refute our arguments if they are able to do that. Let them meet us hand to hand and examine every point."[62]

This is an invitation to a debate on divine things. However, it is implied that in this comparison the worshippers of gods will be clearly inferior. They will lose (and their cause will be deserted) "together with their shrines and their jests". *Cum delubris ac ludibriis suis* is a play on the words *delubrum* (shrine) and *ludibrium* (jest) in which Roman temples are associated and labelled with mere jokes or children's games.[63]

Thus, Lactantius invites pagans to argue for their religion. We will have a closer look at what he expects from the argumentation. He writes:

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[59] Lactantius' main thesis is that the real justice is possible only when the right religion prevails. People are wicked and unjust because false gods are worshipped (Lact., inst. 5.8).

[60] Lact., inst. 5.19,11 argues that religion cannot be imposed by force. Lact., inst. 5.19,22: For religion is to be defended, not by putting to death, but by dying; not by cruelty, but by patient endurance; not by guilt, but by good faith: for the former belong to evil, but the latter to good; and it is necessary for that which is good to have place in religion, and not that which is evil.

[61] Lact., inst. 5.19,1-6.

[62] Lact., inst. 5.19,9-20.

[63] Lact., inst. 5.19,9.

> Let their priests (*pontifices*) come forth into the midst, whether the inferior ones (*minores*) or the supreme (*maximi*), their flamens (*flamines*), augurs (*augures*) and also sacrificial kings (*reges sacrificuli*) and the priests (*sacerdotes*) and ministers (*antistites*) of their cults and let them call us together to an assembly.

The many terms are meant to stress the large number of different pagan priesthoods which is implicitly contrasted with the simplicity of Christianity.[64]

Lactantius continues with repeated invitations: "Let them exhort us to perform the worship of their gods" and "Let them try to convince us that there are many beings by whose divinity and providence all things are governed." The multitude of deities is emphasized and the contrast with the single Christian God is indicated here. Then Lactantius turns to question the authority of antiquity: "Let them show how the origins and beginnings of their sacred rites and gods were handed down to mortals." He implies that, contrary to Christianity, Roman religion lacked divine revelation and authorization. Next he asks for the philosophical foundations of Roman religion: "Let them explain what is their source and principle", suggesting again that the Romans had neither *fons* nor *ratio* in their religion. Its ethical basis is required as well: "Let them set forth what reward there is in their worship and what punishment follows from despising (that is, neglect); why the gods wish to be worshipped by humans; what human piety contributes to them, if they are blessed." Finally, Lactantius demands Roman pagans to confirm "all these things not by their own assertion - for the authority of a mortal human is of no weight - but by some divine testimonies, as we do."[65] Here he implies that, unlike Christianity, Roman religion has no testimonies that originate from divine authority. Lactantius points out that Christians were acquainted with both the

[64] Lact., inst. 5.19,10.

[65] Lact., inst. 5.19,10.

pagan system and the Christian one. Therefore, he argues, pagans should believe the Christians, who knew better.[66]

In Chapter 5.19, Lactantius aims at showing that the religion of gods is limited to external practices while the religion of the Christians is entirely involved with inner feelings.[67] He builds a dichotomy, contrasting the devotion of Christians with the superficiality of pagans. In their great commitment and faith, Christians are ready to die for their religion.[68] By contrast, pagans come to make sacrifices, offering nothing from within (*nihil intimum*), nothing of their own (*nihil proprium*) - that is, nothing from their inner selves - no uprightness of mind, no reverence or fear, to their gods.[69] Thus, Lactantius continues, when pagans have completed their empty sacrifices, they leave their religion in the temple and with the temple as they have found it. The expression "in the temple and with the temple" (*in templo et cum templo*) stresses the materiality of pagan religion. Pagans neither bring anything of their religion with them nor bring anything back. Lactantius stresses that pagans remain untouched by their religion; furthermore, they do not give anything from themselves.[70] The rites (*religiones*) of this kind do not make humans good. Neither do they teach anything that could lead to a good life, wisdom or faith.[71]

Lactantius attacks his opponents with a series of rhetorical questions. The repetition makes the attack even more effective. He asks: "For what is the superstition (*superstitio*) of those gods? What is its power? What its discipline? What its origin? What its theory? What its foundation? What its substance? What is its propensity or what

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[66] Lact., inst. 5.19,20: *Cum autem nos in eorum doctrinis versemur, cur nobis aut non credunt, qui utrumque novimus, aut invident, quia falsis vera praetulimus?*

[67] Lact., inst. 5.19,27-34.

[68] Lact., inst. 15.19,26 on the devotion of the Christians: *Igitur dei cultus, quoniam militia caelestis est, devotionem maximam fidemque desiderat.*

[69] Lact., inst. 5.19,27: *Isti autem cum ad sacrificandum veniunt, nihil intimum, nihil proprium diis suis offerunt, non integritatem mentis, non reverentiam, non timorem.*

[70] Lact., inst. 5.19,27: *Peractis itaque sacrificiis inanibus omnem religionem in templo et cum templo sicut invenerant relinquunt nihilque secum ex ea neque afferunt neque referunt.*

[71] Lact., inst. 5.19,28.

is its promise [...]?"[72] Then, he asks himself and sums up: he does not see anything else in the religion of gods but a rite that pertains to the fingers only. Thus, according to Lactantius, the pagan religion is only outward rituals, *ritus ad solos digitos pertinens*.[73]

In Lactantius' contraposition, Christianity is all that Roman civic religion is lacking. He asserts: "Instead, our religion is firm and solid and unchangeable because it teaches justice, because it is always with us, because it prevails entirely in the soul of the worshipper, because it takes the mind itself as a sacrifice."[74] The religion of gods requires nothing else but the blood of sacrificial animals and smoke and stupid libations. By contrast, in Christianity, a truthful mind, a pure breast (that is, heart) and an innocent life are needed.[75]

Moreover, Lactantius asserts that pagan religion was performed by adulteresses, procuresses and prostitutes as well as gladiators, robbers, thieves and poisoners.[76] The most shameful people of Roman society are brought forth and associated with Roman civic religion - a frequently-used rhetorical tool in both Greco-Roman and Christian disputes. By contrast, in Christianity, there is no place even for a slight or ordinary offence, not to mention an evil mind or an evil prayer.[77]

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[72] Lact., inst. 5.19,29: *Quae est enim superstitio illorum deorum? Quae vis? Quae disciplina? Quae origo? Quae ratio? Quod fundamentum? Quae substantia? Quo tendit aut quid pollicetur ...?* In his use of the term *superstitio*, Lactantius is attached to the Roman tradition of the concept. For the term *superstitio*, see M. Kahlos, *Religio and superstitio. Retortions and phases of a binary opposition in Late Antiquity*, in: At 96 (2007), 389-408.

[73] Lact., inst. 5.19,29: *in qua nihil aliud video quam ritum ad solos digitos pertinentem.*

[74] Lact., inst. 5.19,30: *Nostra vero religio eo firma est et solida et immutabilis, quia iustitiam docet, quia nobiscum simper est, quia tota in animo colentis est, quia mentem ipsam pro sacrificio habet.*

[75] Lact., inst. 5.19,30: *Illic nihil exigitur aliud quam sanguis pecudum et fumus et inepta libatio, hic bona mens, purum pectus, innocens vita. In De legibus* (2.19) Cicero offers his ideal of Roman religion in which the gods should be approached in purity and piety. Lactantius (inst. 5.20.3) even refers to Cicero's words.

[76] Lact., inst. 5.19,30f. Lactantius fails to mention *flamines* and Vestal virgins who were subject to strict regulations. See, e.g., M. Beard / J. North / S. Price (eds.), *Religions of Rome II: A Sourcebook*, Cambridge 1998, 196f., 252f.

[77] Lact., inst. 5.19,32.

Lactantius contrasts the *outwardness* of the pagan purification with the *inwardness* of the Christian purification. The worshippers of gods think that they have made sacrifices piously if they have washed their skin, that is, if they have purified themselves only outwardly, on the surface. Lactantius wonders how pagans could imagine that any streams could wash away or any seas purify the lusts that are shut up within their breasts. By comparison, Christians understood that it was better to purify the mind of evil lusts.[78] Purification was an important issue in the disputes between pagans and Christians. Pagan polemicists such as Julian argued against the Christian baptism in a way similar to Lactantius, asking how Christians could imagine that the ritual of baptism would wash away their crimes and lusts.[79]

6. Conclusion

It has been beyond the scope of this article to make any specific statements of the accuracy or inaccuracy of the image of Roman religion that Lactantius depicts in his *Institutiones divinae*. Instead, I have discussed how Lactantius builds a dichotomy between Christianity and Roman religion, depicting Roman religion as a negative of the Christian one. From the perspective of the research of images or conceptions, it is less significant whether an image is *true* or *false*. What is more crucial is to survey what kind of images are created, how and why these images are formed and how these images still influence us.

In modern research, Roman religion is usually not considered a form of *believing* but rather *doing*;[80] moreover, it is claimed, it was not a matter of personal convictions or emotions but rather of action aimed to maintain social coherence.[81] Furthermore, in modern characterizations, Roman religion is often understood in relation and

[78] Lact., inst. 5.19,33f.

[79] Jul., Gal. 245C-D.

[80] I am inclined to cast doubts on whether 'believing' and 'doing' can be distinguished from each other.

[81] Furthermore, both Christian apologists and modern researchers too often fail to take notice of any changes and transformations in Greco-Roman paganism under the Empire. These changes have been analyzed outstandingly by P. Veyne e.g., in *Une evolution du paganisme gréco-romain. Injustice et piété des dieux, leurs ordres ou 'oracles'*, in: Latomus 45 (1986), 259-283.

even as opposite to Christianity, particularly to modern Christianity - not as an entity of its own. This is why it is imperative for modern researchers of ancient religions to reconsider in what extent Christian apologists and Lactantius among them have influenced the modern - even scholarly - conceptions of Roman religion or Greco-Roman religions in general.[82] Therefore, the research of the images conveyed by Christians on other religions is fundamental for understanding ancient Christians - the creators of these images - as well as ourselves.

[82] One, rather banal example of the modern conceptions of the Roman religion is R. Stark's influential *The rise of Christianity. A Sociologist reconsiders History*, Princeton 1996, 206, in which Stark bases his knowledge of 'paganism' on Lactantius' characterization in the above discussed passage, inst. 5.19,9: it "is no more than worship by the fingertips."

Nullus quippe credit aliquid, nisi prius cogitaverit esse credendum:[1]

Augustine as Apologist

Karla Pollmann[2]

It is what we are all inclined to do,
To direct our enquiry not by the matter itself,
But by the views of our opponents.
(Aristotle, De caelo 294 B 5)

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[1] Aug., praed. 2.5: "No one believes something unless he or she has first thought of it as something that ought to be believed", as a locus classicus for apologetics leading to faith, cf. E. TeSelle, *Augustine's Strategy as an Apologist*, Villanova 1974, 43. This has to be separated from inner-Christian, pastoral arguments, which seem to say the opposite, like Aug., Eu. Io. 29.6 *Intellectus enim merces est fidei. Ergo noli quaerere intelligere ut credas, sed crede ut intelligas; quoniam nisi credideritis, non intelligetis* [Jes 7:9 LXX] ("For understanding is the reward of faith. Thus, do not seek to understand in order to believe, but believe in order to understand; for if you do not believe, you will not understand"); for the different versions of Jes 7:9 and the history of their exegesis see W. Geerlings, *Jes 7,9b bei Augustinus. Die Geschichte eines fruchtbaren Mißverständnisses*, in: WiWei 50 (1987), 5-12.

[2] This paper was revised for publication during the summer of 2007 when I was Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Theology at Aarhus University. I am most grateful for the feedback I received on this paper, especially from Leonid Zhmud (St. Petersburg) and Stephen Lake (Konstanz). A version of this paper was delivered at the University of Malta as the 11th Annual Augustine Lecture in November 2007. Moreover this work forms part of my large interdisciplinary project on the reception of Augustine from 430 to 2000, generously funded by the Leverhulme Trust (for further information see http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/classics/after-augustine/ [2/11/2008]).

1. Introduction

Historically speaking Augustine lived in a period when Christian apologetics as an argumentative defence of Christianity against pagan criticism became more and more obsolete: Christianity had become the established and only acknowledged religion of the Roman Empire in 395 with the edict of Theodosius. Augustine's liminal position as apologist is evident when one looks at established handbooks of apologetic writers where he either does not occur at all,[3] or as one of the very last exponents of this intellectual tradition.[4] Augustine is then often called the last of the Latin apologists, and his *City of God* the culmination that concludes the tradition.[5] However, although the historical necessity to develop apologetic arguments against a pagan environment in the strict sense of the word became obsolete around

[3] E.g. M. Edwards / M. Goodman / S. Price / C. Rowland (eds.), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire. Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, Oxford 1999, who is concerned with the first three centuries, S. Ackermann, *Christliche Apologetik und heidnische Philosophie im Streit um das Alte Testament*, Stuttgart 1997, who concentrates mainly on the second and third centuries, and especially the Greek tradition, and A. Wlosok / F. Paschoud (eds.), *L'apologétique chrétienne gréco-latine à l'époque prénicénienne*, EnAC 51, Vandœuvres-Genève 2004.

[4] Cf. M. Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum. Die Kontroverse um den christlichen Wahrheitsanspruch in den ersten Jahrhunderten*, Paderborn ²2001, 130-142, who deals 142-144 briefly with Orosius; see also M. Fiedrowicz, *Christen und Heiden. Quellentexte zu ihrer Auseinandersetzung in der Antike*, Darmstadt 2004, 180-194. This is indeed also true for the project on early Christian apologetics in Aarhus.

[5] G.J.P. O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God. A Reader's Guide*, Oxford 1999, 39; TeSelle, 1974, 4 identifies three different apologetic phases in Augustine: an early protreptic one, characterized by dialogue, a mid-career one marked by eristic controversies, and a late one which embarks on a serious defense and justification of the Christian belief against the champions of the Roman system of government. Moreover, TeSelle, 1974, 46f. lists the works which Possidius in his *Indiculus* categorizes under the rubric *Contra paganos*: Aug., Ord.; Imm.; Util. cred.; Ver. rel.; Cons.; Div.; Civ., Acad.; and some other works which are now lost. Finally, TeSelle, 1974, 46f. identifies various apologetic themes in Augustine: the possibility of certain knowledge, the necessity of belief based on authority, the exhortation to conversion, the defense of Christian beliefs and Scripture (also against heretics!), the defense of the Catholic Church's acquiescence in coercion, the defense of *tempora christiana*.

400 AD, the methods (maybe more than many of the specific arguments) used by apologetic writers remained relevant in all sorts of circumstances and contexts, especially when there was a sense of facing a *crisis*. This is why we also find scholarly overviews where apologetics can be surveyed throughout the centuries beyond 400 AD,[6] or publications where apologetics can indeed be an active discipline, still creatively producing arguments that seek to relate the Biblical revelation to the world around us.[7] Already Overbeck diagnosed that the originally ephemeral genre of apologetics managed to survive in various metamorphoses by directing its issues at a Christian audience.[8] Analogously, in German catholic theology since the 19th century the term *Fundamentaltheologie* (foundational or sometimes also fundamental theology) has been used, denoting a sub-discipline of theology that rationally and scientifically defends aspects of the Christian faith against any criticism from outside (and later partly also from inside) the Christian community itself.[9]

Augustine's liminal position as regards apologetics becomes also evident when one looks at some standard works dealing with

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[6] E.g. A. Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, London 1971, who covers apologetics in the New Testament, in the Patristic Era, in the Middle Ages, from the Sixteenth through the Eighteenth Centuries (Reformation and Counter Reformation), Protestantism and Catholicism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

[7] E.g. A. Richardson, *Christian Apologetics*, London 1947, 7 who defines apologetics thus: "Christian apologetics deals with the question of the nature and validity of our knowledge of God, and thus compels us to examine the methods and conclusions of theological enquiry in the light of our general knowledge of the world around us and of ourselves in relation to that world."

[8] F. Overbeck, *Über die Anfänge der patristischen Literatur*, in: HZ 48 (1882), 417-472 (447. 453-455).

[9] M. Seckler, *Fundamentaltheologie. Aufgaben und Aufbau, Begriff und Namen*, in: HFTh 4 (2000), 331-400 (385. 389f. 400 etc.) differentiates between 'apologetics' which is directed against eternal opponents (*extrinsezistisch*), and 'foundational theology' aiming at the cognitive, rational description of faith issues for Christians themselves (*intrinsezistisch*). This terminology is by no means universal; see also G. Rothuizen, *Apologetics in Oxford. The Theology of Maurice F. Wiles*, Kampen 1987, 9, who seems to see a difference between 'apologetics' and 'foundational theology' without ever explaining this.

his thought. It is noteworthy that Gerald Bonner in his well-known book *St. Augustine of Hippo. Life and Controversies* (London 1963) deals with Augustine's polemic against the Manichees, and the Donatists as well as the Pelagian controversy. But the anti-Pagan angle is completely missing, as is the *City of God* in the Index. Interestingly, John O'Meara, *Charter of Christendom. The Significance of the City of God* (New York 1951) emphasizes that despite the fact that paganism was not that dominant anymore there was still a persistent or renewed feeling of *crisis*.[10] Augustine's answer to this is a positive one, claiming the *eventual* fulfilment of a meaningful human history.[11] But one can call him a master of delaying everybody's certainty about this, cultivating the Christian "principle of uncertainty,"[12] by emphasizing that we do not know who belongs to the saved and

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[10] J. O'Meara, *Charter of Christendom. The Significance of the City of God*, New York 1951, xi: "The prospects of Christianity in the first quarter of the fifth century may have seemed bright; but we tend to forget that until that time the Church's history had been one, for the most part, of bare toleration and frequent persecution. [...] Even in the fifth century pagans had not lost all countenance. Again the decline of the powerful and closely integrated Empire of Rome, evident to all and admitted by Augustine, must have struck its citizens with a greater chill than that which affects in our day [i.e. the 1950ties] the loosely and vaguely associated West. We should, then, note that the comparison of our situation to his is closer than, perhaps, is ordinarily realized. And we should take hope from his calm confidence at such a crisis in consciously drawing up in the *City of God* the charter of a Christian future, not only for Rome but for all the world."

[11] O'Meara, 1951, xii: "The keynote of the *City of God* is fulfilment, not destruction." This thought is particularly challenging as climate changes suggest chaos and destruction for the cosmic earth as we know it in its material shape - for the cosmos itself this means mere reconfiguration, for us however [...]. Secondly, O'Meara, 1951, xiii, rightly emphasizes: "The practical problem with which Augustine had - and Christianity still has - to deal was the problem of the spiritual Church in a secular world" and concludes: "The approach throughout this book has been to present the *City of God* as a vision of man's destiny." (111).

[12] P. von Moos, *Das Geheimnis der Prädestination im Mittelalter*, in: Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie 2 (2004), 158-192 (179). One can safely say that this is a line of thought one can encounter in many diverse writings of Augustine, including his teaching about grace.

who does not till the very end. Thus, the anthropological fact of persistent existential uncertainty is complemented by the Christian principle of eschatological suspense, which according to Augustine should make human beings better and urge them to exercise their faculties of love and understanding to the full.[13]

Within this framework, apologetics is a branch of theology in which the truth of the Christian faith is, occasionally in a polemical way, but predominantly with rational arguments, both demarcated against other religions and ideologies, and asserted as the only or best truth available.[14] In order to achieve this, apologetics has two components or argumentative strategies: a defending one and an

[13] O'Meara, 1951, 113: "Augustine was not among those who believed that the end of the world was at hand. He left the future to God on whose providence all must depend. In the meantime he would seek to find in all merely human things the good that, as created, they must possess. If the radical division between the two cities is in the will, if love is the final determinant between their citizens, love is also the dominating quality of Augustine's book. Failure to serve the true God apart, all else he loves; all else he cherishes; all else he freely embraces."

[14] For Maurice F. Wiles in Rothuizen, 1987, 17, apologetics means "the need to express Christian truth in a form that would meet the requirements and answer the objections of the surrounding world." But already second century apologists were mainly read by Christians and had not much visible impact on the surrounding world (Edwards et al. [eds.], 1999, 8f.). This and the strongly assertive character of some apologetic arguments make Wiles' claim partly questionable. Moreover, if someone like Wilhelm Herrmann pleads for a strict separation of matters of faith and scientific knowledge this may again imply hermetic separation of the conflicting parties or positions involved. In this case, against B.W. Sockness, *Against False Apologetics. Wilhelm Herrmann and Ernst Troeltsch in Conflict*, Tübingen 1998, passim, Herrmann's arguments or method should not really be called 'apologetics'. A further ambiguity is added to the conception of 'apologetics' if one considers the "deep-seated suspicion of human reason and its ability to offer anything but a partial account of God and the divine purpose in words" (Edwards et al. [eds.], 1999, 10). Moreover, Wiles in Rothuizen, 1987, 34 defines theology as "reasoned discourse about God", which puts theology and apologetics in close neighbourhood.

attacking one.[15] It aims at strengthening Christians in their faith and win others over to it, rather than actually at defeating intellectual opponents. Thus, apologetics can formally be described in two different ways:[16]

1. by way of *content* as consisting of a set of arguments or parts thereof that are directed against the surrounding critical environment and are linked to a small variety of literary genres, sometimes, but not necessarily, entitled *apologia*.[17] Before Augustine, such apologetic writings and their arguments were often triggered by a specific event or crisis and dealt with a certain, potentially ephemeral issue. In the case of Augustine's *City of God* the triggering crisis is the sack of Rome in 410 AD by the Goths, but what he wrote gained universal, not ephemeral dimensions. Themes that reoccur in apologetic writing throughout are:[18] the morality and loyalty of Christians towards the state; faith versus logos; Christianity's claim of universal truth; the 'proof of greater age' (*Altersbeweis*)[19] that claimed that Christianity had its roots in the Old Testament and was therefore older and

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[15] This double strategy can first be found in Plat., apol., where first all accusations against Socrates are refuted and then Socrates' own principles and 'philosophy' are expounded.

[16] See also the very helpful analysis of Eusebius' usage of the term *apologia* in M. Frede, *Eusebius' Apologetic Writings*, in: Edwards et. al. (eds.), 1999, 223-250 (225-231).

[17] The term *apologia* occurs first in the teacher of rhetoric, Antiphon of Rhamnus (480-411), or. 5.7; 6.7, who wrote forensic speeches for defendants; see Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 18-23, who emphasizes that already the Christians did not see *apologia* as identical with a forensic speech on their behalf as institutionally they rarely had the opportunity to represent their case in court. Alternatively, there was the possibility of sending a petition for appeal to the emperor, which was also called *apologia*. Finally writings dealing with controversies around an individual theologian can also be called *apologia*. It is noteworthy that Augustine only uses the term *apologia* three times in his extant oeuvre, each time when he mentions the title of Ambrose's work *Apologia prophetae David* (Aug., Pelag. 4.29; Jul., 1.10 and 2.20).

[18] See also Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 147-311.

[19] The *Altersbeweis* was particularly important because pagan "Greeks and Romans privileged religious tradition as the principal source of religious authority" (Edwards et al. [eds.], 1999, 4). It had also been used in Jewish apologetics, cf. W. Horbury, *Old Testament Interpretation in the Writings of the Church Fathers*, in: M.J.

generally better than pagan thought, especially philosophy. Indeed, Christian apologetics would claim that pagan philosophers had been inspired or had plagiarized Scripture for their thinking which showed sometimes striking parallels with Christian thought. Some, especially Arnobius, turned necessity into a virtue and claimed that the newness of Christianity was actually an advantage.[20] Apologetics attempted to find answers to the criticism that the Old Testament lacked literary quality, had a bad morality, and that its (eschatological and historical) prophecies were invalid.[21]

2. by way of *method* as a strategy, based on principles of forensic rhetoric in particular,[22] that can be part of practically any literary genre, including crypto-apologetics and mixed forms, to defend

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Mulder (ed.), *MIKRA. Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, Assen 1988, 727-787 (742-744).

[20] Cf. Ackermann, 1997, 48-51.

[21] Ackermann, 1997, passim. Many of these issues reoccur also in later apologetic efforts, even in the 19th and 20th centuries, of course often in a different accentuation, cf., e.g., Sockness, 1998 (faith versus scientific knowledge as central in Wilhelm Herrmann and Ernst Troeltsch); Richardson, 1947 (Christianity versus philosophy and ideology; in history; as revelation; and miracles; and prophecy; linked to the authority and interpretation of the Bible; faith and reason); Rothuizen, 1987, 15 on Wiles' apologetics as the remaking of Christian doctrine that includes destruction; W.A. Dembski / J.W. Richards (eds.), *Unapologetic Apologetics. Meeting the Challenges of Theological Studies*, Downers Grove 2001 (timelessness of faith versus the historicity of humans and their developments; scripture; Christology; universalism; science; issues of feminism and genetics in connection with the virgin birth are perhaps in their specific argumentation time-bound but the underlying issues and maybe also the way of handling them are old).

[22] C. Tornau, *Zwischen Rhetorik und Philosophie. Augustins Argumentationstechnik in De civitate Dei und ihr bildungsgeschichtlicher Hintergrund*, Berlin 2006, 388 no. 150, sees here a contrast with the Greek apologetic tradition where the philosophic pragmatics is paradigmatic, presumably established by Justin. This judgment goes back to R. Heinze, *Tertullians Apologeticum*, Leipzig 1910, 279-490; see also R. Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian*, Oxford 1971, 5-7.141. Already M. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century*, London 1988, 188 opts against such a clear separation of the Greek and the Latin apologetic tradition and pleads rather for mixed forms that combine the forensic and the deliberative mode; similarly, Fiedrowicz, ²2001, does

or expound Christian tenets of faith in the face of criticism.[23] This is analogous to, e.g., satire, which can be both a literary genre in itself and a literary strategy in other genres. Such a wider definition of *apologia* or apologetic writing is already found in Eusebius, p.e. 1.3,6; 1.5,2, and is seen as a fulfilment of 1Petr 3:15 ἕτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογίαν παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος ("be always prepared to give justification (*apologia*) to anyone who asks for a rational reason (*logos*) regarding the hope that is in you"),[24] which can be called the biblical mantra of apologetics. It is, however, noteworthy that in a modern apology Dembski and Richards take Jude 3 "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" as their starting point; 1Petr 3:15 is never mentioned as far as I can see. This gives a different focus and strategy to the apologetics of their collected volume, namely a greater willingness to become assertive.[25]

Generally, it is more the *method* than the *content* that is considered to be the lasting achievement of the early apologists. "Christian apologists must remain eternally indebted to the Fathers of the Church for their boldness in seeking to relate the Biblical revelation to the whole of human culture, human philosophy, and human history."[26] In the following we intend to illustrate all these issues by looking at two distinctly different works of Augustine, viz. his *City of God* (written 412 to 426), often declared to be an apology *qua genre*, which is

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not make such a distinction. For other differences between the Greek and the Latin apologetic tradition see Edwards et al. (eds.), 1999, 3.

[23] See also Edwards et al. (eds.), 1999, 1f.

[24] See also Frede, 1999, 228f.

[25] W.A. Dembski, *The Task of Apologetics*, in: Dembski / Richards (eds.), 2001, 31-43, (31.35.40) who refers to the so-called Vincentian canon (Vinc.-Lir., *Commonitorium* 2): *in ipsa item catholica ecclesia magnopere curandum est ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est, and modernizes it.*

[26] Dulles, 1971, 71. Grant, 1988, 202 also emphasizes the merit of the early apologists as consisting "not in abiding doctrines but in approaches to doctrinal problems." It is remarkable that the early apologetic writings were used relatively rarely in the ensuing centuries, cf. Grant, 1988, 191-202 and Edwards et al. (eds.), 1999, 10-13. This is of course different in the case of Augustine's *City of God*.

explicitly stated in this work,[27] and the partly simultaneously written *De Genesi ad Litteram* (written roughly 404 to 415) which is a commentary *qua genre*, and one with a very high scientific claim, which makes it *qua method* an apologetic work, something on which Augustine reflects several times explicitly.[28] The liminal position of Augustine makes him an ideal subject to see how and why he employs certain argumentative techniques and whether in this he was forward or backward looking or both.

2. The Opponents of the *City of God* and of the *De Genesi ad Litteram*

The *City of God* employs with its bipartite structure of ten 'negative' books followed by twelve 'positive' books an established apologetic technique as sketched above. Books 1 to 10 attack and destroy the pagan belief in gods. They are subdivided into Books 1-5 which refute that the belief in those gods is useful for this life, that is, they refute pagan religion, and Books 6-10 which refute that the belief in pagan gods is useful for the life to come, that is, they refute pagan philosophy, especially Neo-Platonism. Books 11 to 22 are an assertive demonstration that both this life and the life to come are governed by the Christian God and that reality is shaped according to biblical principles and narratives and that these principles and narratives can be recognized and found in all reality. This second part is subdivided into Books 11-14 which describe the beginning of the world according to Genesis, Books 15-18 which deal with the actual history of the world from post-Paradise to the present and are predominantly based on biblical narrative, and Books 19-22 which describe the end of the world with Final Judgment, Hell, and Heaven.

One has to make a careful distinction in the *City of God* between the argumentative opponents, who are fictitious educated pagans

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[27] See Aug., civ. 1 praef.: *defendere adversus eos, qui conditori eius deos suos praeferunt* ("to defend the City of God against those who favour their own gods above her Founder"); for the authenticity of the title *De civitate Dei contra paganos* see O'Daly, 1999, 273f.

[28] See especially Aug., Gen.litt. 1.1,1 (quoted below no. 36), which has an apologetic stance without, however, specifying an opponent. See also below for other pertinent material.

criticizing Christianity and are predominantly mentioned in the third person[29], and the communicative addressees (the "judges") of the *City of God*, who are accosted in the second person and assumed to be educated Christians.[30] This means that presumably for the first time in the apologetic tradition the addressee is envisaged as being predominantly Christian,[31] whereas before the targeted addressee was in the first instance the pagan opponent, although the work could of course *also* be read by Christians to equip them with arguments against pagan critique. Conversely, despite its primarily intended Christian addressee the *City of God* could of course and indeed appears to have been read by pagans as well: at civ. 5.26 Augustine mentions people who after having read the first three books of his *City of God* were preparing a counter-statement and were waiting for a time when they could publish this without risk.[32] Of course the pagan opponent, presenting specific critical arguments against Christianity has to be refuted point by point. In the case of the *City of God* this opponent is a fictitious character Augustine uses to tackle any possible argument against Christianity he can think of and that Christians might encounter in real life: thus, the *City of God* is an encyclopaedic, universal super-apology, comprising many ar-

[29] This modifies Tornau, 2006, 107-126. 389, who claims that the pagan opponents are only mentioned in the third person; for contrary evidence see below.

[30] See also O'Daly, 1999, 36f. who characterizes the *City of God* as hortatory and instructive rather than as catechetic or polemical. Ackermann, 1997, 158-164 emphasizes that especially before the fourth century only a small minority of Christians was sufficiently educated to participate in the apologetic attempts to integrate some aspects of pagan education and literature into a Christian education or argumentation.

[31] This modifies Tornau, 2006, 110-114 etc., who emphasizes that the addressees of the *City of God* are purely Christian; P.G. Walsh, *Augustine, De Civitate Dei, Books 1 & 2, Edited with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Oxford 2005, 2f. still operates with the assumption of a potentially dual readership. Important in this context is Tornau's excellent observation (420) that especially the final Books 21 and 22 occasionally also target a Christian or heretical opponent.

[32] In this context Augustine also emphasizes the superiority of rational argument against irrational polemics, which is indicative of most of his *City of God*. (I am grateful for this reference to Stephen Lake, Konstanz).

guments of earlier apologetic writers.[33] However, Augustine's approach has been called "subjective and psychological rather than objective and systematic."[34]

A careful analysis of the whole of the *City of God* shows that Augustine never loses sight of his predominantly pagan argumentative opponents, not even in the last books of this work. Therefore it is wrong if e.g. Dulles, but also others state that the second part of the *City of God* is not really part of the apologetic effort.[35] On the contrary, the argumentative strategy of the entire work is informed by the awareness that there is a broad spectrum of intellectual criticism from highly educated pagans with a long philosophical and antiquarian tradition which is potentially not only damaging Christianity by making it unattractive for potential newcomers, but may also discourage already converted Christians by making them doubtful about whether they adhere to the right religion. At the same time, however, it is clear, that Augustine argues from a Christian perspective: "our Christian authors" (7.1), "the good and true mediator" paraphrasing, a Christian connoisseur in mind, of course Jesus Christ (10.24), "our adversaries" (numerous times for various types of pagans, e.g. 1. 15f.; 3.14; 4.11-13; 4.15; 4.24; 7.9; 12.19; 13.8; 13.24; 17.4; 22.8; 22.10), but this expression denotes sometimes also misguided Christians that threaten to undermine the true Christian faith from within, e.g. Origen at 11.23; 12.14; 21.17; generally at 21.18-27). Christians are occasionally addressed directly, e.g. "you, o faithful ones of Christ" (1.28), whereas the pagans are mentioned in the third person: 1 praef. "to persuade the proud", 1.1 "they ought to be grateful", 1.12 "those against whom I have undertaken the defence of the City of God", which is repeated in similar words still at 21.11; often their opinion is quoted without naming someone in particu-

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[33] Cf. O'Daly, 1999, 39-52. Most apologetic writings, especially in the early period, were triggered by a concrete issue and have then only limited agenda. Other universal apologetic attempts are Lact., inst.; Eus., p.e.; d.e., and Thdt., cur.

[34] Dulles, 1971, 60.

[35] Dulles, 1971, 69 is wrong when she omits the last twelve books of the *City of God* in her survey "since they pertain more directly to dogmatic than to apologetical theology". O'Daly, 1999, 135-233 in his paraphrase of *City of God* Books 11 to 22 does not elucidate their apologetic dimension, as he seems to think they have none.

lar, e.g. "they say" and similar expressions (e.g. 4.10; 8.8; 9.1; 10.19; 11.13; 11.32; 11.34; 12.10; 16.11; 20.7; 20.10; 21.3). But at other times Augustine names the opponents either to quote them in support of his opinion against other pagans (thus playing off pagans against pagans, an attractive and established apologetic technique), or in order to refute them, like Cicero, Varro, Sallust or Porphyry. Here we also find sometimes a direct address of pagan opponents: "your Platonist colleague Apuleius" (10.27); "you proclaim, confess" etc. (10.29), or the rhetorical apostrophe of the learned pagan antiquarian Varro (6.6; 7.5; 7.22).

Sometimes the false opinions of pagans are similar to those of heretics and require the same effort to refute (e.g. 16.41), or such opinion has to be carefully separated from heretical opinion (14.2; 17.4). Sometimes he affirmatively states his own position: "we trust Scriptures" (11.3); "we must next consider what response we are to give to those [...]" (11.5); "no Christian doubts" (22.29). Most tricky are situations where Christians follow pagan criticism or are tempted by it (22.28 "there are not a few Christians who have a liking for Plato"), which includes Augustine himself, of course.

Sometimes it is not entirely clear whether he has pagans or Christians in mind, or both, especially when it comes to controversial interpretations of the Bible (15.1 many opinions about paradise [see also Gen.litt. 8.1,1f.]; 15.11; 15.20; 15.23; 15.27; 17.12; 20.1; 21.9). This is of course facilitated by his dominant technique of often not precisely demarcating the exact nature of his opponent (see above). Nevertheless, Augustine is keen to prove things (20.30 *satis ergo sit, quod et novis et veteribus litteris sacris hoc praenuntiatum esse probavimus*) and to give evidence (21.2 *quid igitur ostendam*, 6 *de his autem miraculorum locis nobis ad ea, quae futura persuadere incredulis volumus, satis illa sufficiant, quae nos quoque possumus experiri, et eorum testes idoneos non difficile est invenire*) or examples from nature (21.4 *naturalia exempla*), adhering to good rational (and not polemic) apologetic method.

The structure of *De Genesi ad Litteram* is significantly different from that of the *City of God*, as it is not governed by the logic of the argument but by the sequence of the biblical text. The biblical text is here at the centre of attention and not just a means as in the *City of God*. Whereas the *City of God* is an apologetic work with an inter-

pretative edge, the *De Genesi ad Litteram* is an interpretative work with an apologetic edge. Books 1 to 4 deal with the first account of creation (Gen 1:1-2:4a), Book 1 comments on Gen 1:1-5, Book 2 on Gen 1:6-19 (including remarks against divination), Book 3 on Gen 1:20-31, and Book 4 on Gen 2:1-3 (including a discussion of the meaning of the numbers six and seven regarding the days of creation). In Book 5 the meaning and differentiation of the two accounts of creation and the theory of the *rationes causales* are expounded and general comments on Gen 2:4-7 are made. Books 6 to 12 concentrate on the second account of creation (Gen 2:4b-3:24): Book 6 comments on Gen 2:7a (Adam's body formed from dust), Book 7 on Gen 2:7b (God's breath of life and the question of the nature of the human soul), Book 8 on Gen 2:8-17 (Paradise: Adam, God's government), Book 9 on Gen 2:18-24 (Paradise: animals, woman). Book 10 contains a digression on the origin and nature of the human soul, Book 11 comments on Gen 2:25-3:24 (includes discussion of creation and fall of the Devil), and Book 12 contains a digression on Paradise, the third Heaven (2Cor 12:2-4), and various kinds of visions. It is noteworthy that not every biblical verse receives an equal amount of exegetical attention, and that there are extensive digressions.

Nevertheless, generally speaking the argumentative strategy in *De Genesi ad Litteram* is formally surprisingly similar to that of the *City of God*. This is made programmatically clear already in 1.1,1 where Augustine announces to assert and defend the creation story in Genesis as a faithful historical account.[36] He often appeals to his readers with "you see" (1.1,2; 1.3,7; 1.8,14; 1.9,15; 1.10,20; 1.14,28). Like in the *City of God*, there are frequent rhetorical questions, which are meant to move the argument further and sometimes indirectly weaken a certain position without really having an argument against it. Phrases like "who would be so insane as to believe this" (e.g. 4.2,6; 9.9,14), or "the authority of Scripture indubitably teaches" (2.5,9) support this technique. As a whole such phrases are

[36] "So then, in accounts of things done, what one asks is whether they are all to be taken as only having a figurative meaning, or whether they are also to be asserted and defended as a faithful account of what actually happened" (*in narratione ergo rerum factarum quaeritur utrum omnia secundum figurarum tantummodo intellectum accipiantur, an etiam secundum fidem rerum gestarum adserenda et defendenda sint*).

relatively rare, but they are significant: I choose to call this a technique of *argumentative stoppers*, i.e. there comes occasionally a point when Augustine does not use intellectual arguments anymore but just states what *is* right and has to be believed. I venture that he does this at points where he thinks that argument is futile or too difficult. It would be interesting to investigate this further, i.e. at which point does he still argue and where not and why.[37] The opponent is often fictitious (1.19,38; 4.8,16; 11.8,10f.), or anonymous (1.11,23; 2.1,2; 2.1,3; 2.8,11f.; 3.4,6; 3.22,34; 7.2,3; 8.18,37; 9.9,3; 9.9,5; 10.15,26; 11.11,14; 11.20,27), sometimes pagan (natural) philosophers (as in 2.3,6; 2.4,8; 3.9,13); he names opponents rarely (e.g. the Manichees at 7.11,17; 8.2,5), sometimes the people Augustine has in mind seem to be in particular Christians made uncertain by pagan criticism (2.10,23; 2.11,24). In contrast to the *City of God*, we find in the *De Genesi ad Litteram* hardly any explicit references to pagan writings like for instance Vergil's *Aeneid*.[38] Sometimes anti-heretical arguments come in as being relevant or as being out of date (7.11,17 and 8.2,5 respectively, both times seemingly in exchange with the Manichees). As in the *City of God*, Augustine is meticulous in discussing a variety of solutions to a problem, readily admitting that sometimes a plurality of interpretations is possible, that sometimes he cannot offer a solution and that sometimes others or later generations will come up with something better.[39] Scholarship has rightly highlighted the aporetic character of this commentary.

Also remarkable in *De Genesi ad Litteram* is a relatively high number of explicit methodological reflections, as far as I can see more so than in the *City of God* (it is not entirely clear to me why this is so). Augustine shows explicit awareness of the *apologetic* versus the *dogmatic* line of argument: "the Catholic faith prescribes and reason indubitably teaches" (1.14,28); faith and rational grounds agree in the case of Basil the Great (2.4,7: "What he said, you see,

[37] Perhaps assertive self-praise can have a similar function.

[38] G.A. Müller, *Formen und Funktionen der Vergilzitate und -anspielungen bei Augustin von Hippo*, Paderborn 2003, 381-383.

[39] Book 12, a special case in which the meaning of 2Cor 12:2-4 is discussed, appears to employ the same techniques, but there is of course much more room for developing arguments, especially Augustine's own convictions.

is not against the faith, and can also be readily accepted when the grounds for it are set out"). Although Christians strictly speaking have no time for such questions (like e.g. cosmology), because they are not relevant for salvation, they still have to be answered as they threaten to weaken the Christian cause (2.15,34). This is expressed in even more detail and with more vehemence at 1.19,38:

> And what is so vexing is not that misguided people should be laughed at, as that our authors should be assumed by outsiders to have held such views and, to the great detriment of those about whose salvation we are so concerned, should be written off and consigned to the waste paper basket as so many ignoramuses.[40]

His apologetic method for *De Genesi ad Litteram* is explicitly formulated at 1.21,41:

> So we should show that whatever they [sc. pagan philosophers] have been able to demonstrate from reliable sources about the world of nature is not contrary to our literature, while whatever they may have reproduced from any of their volumes that is contrary to this literature of ours, that is, to the Catholic faith, we must either show with some ease, or else believe without any hesitation, to be entirely false. And we should so hold onto our mediator, *in whom are stored up all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge* (Col 2:3), that we are neither seduced by the chatter of false philosophy, not frightened out of our wits by the superstitions of false religion.

He argues in the same vein at 2.1,2:

> Our business now, after all, is to inquire how God's scriptures say he established things according to their proper na-

[40] Cf. 1.20,40 puffed up pagan intellectuals make weaker brothers and sisters insecure)

> tures, and not what he might wish to work in them or out of them as a miracle of his power.

He also turned the accusation of irrational polemics towards his opponents:

> such people do not acknowledge the authority of our literature and are ignorant of the way in which that was said and so they are more likely to poke fun at the sacred books than to repudiate what they have come to hold by reasoned arguments or have proved by the clearest experiments (Gen.litt. 2.1,4).

3. Method and Content in the *City of God* and *De Genesi ad Litteram*

The traumatic event of the sack of Rome in 410 caused both pagans and Christians to doubt the legitimacy and power of the Christian God to protect the Roman Empire, indeed the world from disaster. Especially in the first books of the *City of God* Augustine uses concrete negative events in connection with this attack, like, for instance, the rape of women, especially of nuns, to counter criticism of the weakness of the Christian god and the Christian faith. He then wid-ens his argument to become less ephemeral and more general. By using a historical approach Augustine implicitly claims that the answer to a historical crisis lies in an appropriate understanding of the historical existence and development of states, communities, institutions, human lives and deeds, and everything else. Generally, the purpose of the first ten books of the *City of God* is more the demolition of pagan religion and philosophy, than the explicit construction of a positive alternative.[41] Then, in the second half of the *City of God*, Books 11 to 22, Augustine uses *narratio* as *confirmatio* of his argument, as a positive Christian illustration of the issues that pagan systems of belief or philosophy were not able to handle satisfactorily.[42] Augustine tackles the pagan accusation that the Christian God proves to be ineffective, or even disastrous in human history by choosing a

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[41] This paragraph is much indebted to J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine*, Boston 1985, 39-59.

[42] Cf. B. Studer, *Zum Aufbau von Augustins De civitate dei*, in: B. Bruning et al. (eds.), *Mélanges T.J. van Bavel, vol. 2*, Collectanea Augustiniana, Leuven 1990, 937-951.

universal historical approach. This enables Augustine not only to embed virtually all major apologetic arguments used before him, but to illustrate the counter-statement that it is the incarnation that gives sense to history, i.e. instead of being ineffective in history the Christian God shapes and validates human history:[43] with a linear purpose rather than a cyclical and / or fractured structure, with the unity of a single coherent human community across time and space (for the time being invisibly subdivided into two communities, *civitates*), and with faith and eschatological hope rather than certain knowledge as the present conditions of human life. Whatever it is that the blessed will experience in their union with God that is life, and what we now experience is metaphor, even though language tries to make it the other way around.[44]

As a conviction of faith this is not new but as an apologetic argument this had never been developed so extensively and so stringently before Augustine. He claims this as the only adequate 'hypothesis' to explain the ways of the world. His historical approach throughout the *City of God* is apologetic insofar as his implicit and explicit claim is that the historical event of the incarnation changed human history for ever. In his *Against Heresies* (written 428) Augustine makes the point that not only pagans, but also all heresies can be found out because they all seem to question the historicity of the incarnation.[45] In the *City of God*, Augustine most notably counters this by explaining the effectiveness of Christian salvation throughout the entire history of the world. This strategy itself presets the agenda of the argument as he thereby annihilates all other possible interpretations of history and proofs the veracity of the Christian faith by extracting it from all historical development. This enables him to be universal not only on an argumentative but also on a historical basis - it is in fact the Christian God that has performed and

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[43] This is already prepared in Book 10, where Augustine, in critical exchange with Porphyry, proves Christ to be the only true mediator between God and human beings; B. Studer, *La cognitio historialis di Porfirio nel De civitate Dei di Agostino (civ. 10.32)*, in: *La narrativa Cristiana antica*, Rome 1995, 529-553.

[44] Cf. O'Donnell, 1985, 44.

[45] Cf. R. Dodaro, *"Omens haeretici negant Christum in carne venisse" (Aug. serm. 183.9,13). Augustine on the Incarnation as Criterion for Orthodoxy*, in: AugSt 38 (2007), 163-173.

is still performing the economy of salvation throughout history and reality. Thus, Augustine's universal 'defensive' apology is transformed into a universal 'assertive' historiography. On a smaller scale, already earlier apologies had presented affirmative arguments to prove Christianity's superiority above and indeed its fulfilment of all other religions and philosophies.[46] But Augustine's historical approach is new and surpasses historical arguments of other apologists, who were rather busy proving the superior age of Christianity in comparison to pagan traditions, or, on the contrary, the positive newness of Christianity, or the historical success of Christianity as proof of its god-sent veracity, etc.[47] Nor does Augustine follow a pagan tradition that regarded *historia* as *magistra vitae*, a "teacher of life" presenting a collection of moral exempla to be rejected or to be imitated by later generations,[48] but for him *historia* has to be interpreted and it is not possible to offer its final and definite interpretation before the end of the world.[49] Thus, like in his hermeneutical approach to the Bible he does consider both the Bible and history not as a *mimetic* entity but as a *signifying* one;[50] history is a meaningful sequence of episodes revealing a divine purpose.[51]

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[46] On this dual aspect of the *City of God* see also O'Daly, 1999, 47.

[47] See Ackermann, 1997, 12, and for a detailed overview of all these issues Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 208-226. However, some of these issues are addressed in Augustine as well, e.g. the success of Christianity all over the world (Aug., civ. 22.5).

[48] O'Daly, 1999, 195. Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 130-142 in his otherwise very meritorious study does not explain satisfactorily the specific apologetic achievement of Augustine, nor does G. Bonner, *Augustine*, in: *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* (2006), 99-101, who presents rather a sketch of some main theological tenets of Augustine; better is Dulles, 1971, 59-71.

[49] Cf. R. Kany, *Tempora Christiana. Vom Umgang des antiken Christentums mit Geschichte*, in: ZAC 10 (2006), 564-579 (578f.).

[50] See for this in general K. Pollmann, *Doctrina christiana. Untersuchungen zu den Anfängen der christlichen Hermeneutik*, Fribourg 1996, 184-191.

[51] This seems to be confirmed by Possid., Vit. Aug. 28.6, where Possidius emphasizes that Augustine, when faced with the devastations of North Africa by the Vandals, did not look at them as other people did, but thought more of the damnation of the soul (*non ut ceteri hominum sentiebat et cogitabat; sed altius ac profundius ea considerans, et in his animarum praecipue vel pericula vel mortes praevidens*).

A similar strategy can be observed in the *De Genesi ad Litteram*. As already demonstrated above, Augustine does not confine himself to one clearly defined opponent but tackles issues as they come along, with the aim of drafting a commentary as universal as possible. But here he is willing to admit that later generations may be able to do better than himself (Gen.litt. 1.18,37 etc.[52]), an uncertainty principle reminding of *The City of God*.[53] Of course, in *De Genesi ad Litteram* the sequence of arguments is dictated by the text of the first verses of Genesis which Augustine follows closely line by line. But the mode of argumentation is dictated by the criticism opponents could bring to this text, and be it only that they influence Christians in their doubt about the veracity or validity of this biblical text. Moreover, Augustine uses the text of Genesis to tackle fundamental questions like cosmology, the human soul, grace and predestination, the nature of human beings, their place in the creation and their relationship with God. Instead of a history of salvation as in the *City of God* one could speak here of an anthropology and cosmology of salvation. In both works the book of Genesis is the starting point of history in which already all other history is implicitly embedded. Both the Bible and history have to be understood both literally and as metaphors.

4. A Concrete Example for Comparison

One way of universalising the meaning of Scripture is allegorizing its text, thus widening its impact from telling a single historical event in the past, present or future, to having concrete and contemporary relevance to a potentially universal readership: Augustine "does attempt to prove the truth of Christianity from the fulfilment of what was promised in the OT. He progresses beyond earlier apologists in that he does not limit himself to texts that imply miraculous precognition on the part of the Prophets or hagiographers. Rather he looks upon the total experience of the people of God under the old law as a providential foreshadowing of what was to be accomplished in Christ and the Church. This permits him to engage in a mystical or allegorical interpretation of virtually any text from the OT. While

[52] K. Pollmann, *Augustine, Genesis, and Controversy*, in: AugSt 38 (2007), 203-216 (211).

[53] See above p. 316f.

this form of exegesis may be helpful for Christian spirituality, it creates some difficulties in apologetics, inasmuch as it depends on interpretations that are not evident except, perhaps, to those who are previously convinced that Christ is the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets".[54] Precisely this latter problem Augustine attempts to counter with a mixed interpretation of the OT, insisting also on literal explanations.[55]

This can for instance clearly be observed in civ. 13.2, a chapter entitled "Of Paradise, in which the first human beings were: that it can rightly be understood as having a certain spiritual significance without prejudice to the truth of the historical narrative regarding its corporeal location". Augustine asserts that there are not a few people that deny the literal existence of Paradise altogether, and wish to understand it purely allegorically: "They turn all its trees and fruitbearing plants into virtues and habits of life, as if they were not visible and corporeal objects, but were only so spoken or written of in order to convey symbolic meanings". Augustine admits that such an interpretation is possible, i.e. to understand the Paradise narrative as a moral allegory of the life of the blessed. He adds that an ecclesiological interpretation of Paradise as the Church is also possible, as well as "perhaps other, more appropriate, allegorical interpretations, while also believing in the truth of that story as presented to us in a most faithful narrative of events." As several times in Gen.litt., Augustine leaves here the possibility of multiple readings of scripture open, and allows even for progress of understanding by future readers. Moreover, he stresses the legitimacy of the allegorical interpretation. This may partly have to do with the fact that he wants to confirm various possible Christian readings, but it may also be that especially the moral reading would remind a pagan reader of similar interpretations of pagan myths, especially

[54] Dulles, 1971, 66.

[55] For Augustine's strategy of offering literal interpretations to critical non-believers and allegorical ones to the initiated see Pollmann, 2007, 214. Horbury, 1988, 740.744 emphasizes the generally close connection between apologetic and biblical interpretation; similarly I. Bochet, *"Le Firmament de l'Écriture". L'Herméneutique Augustinienne*, Paris 2004, 455.

in the Stoic and Neo-Platonic tradition. The literal meaning is insisted upon, but not expounded in this chapter of the *City of God*.

Augustine leaves it at that, implicitly referring to Gen.litt. 8.1-4 where he offers a more detailed analysis. He diversifies that some people consider the Paradise account only to be literal,[56] others only to be spiritual,[57] others both,[58] and he confesses to belong to this latter group. So again he illustrates his understanding of Scripture (and thus also of reality) as history and prophecy (representing also future realities) at the same time, for instance Adam as a physical human being, even if he is also a *typos* for Christ (Rom 5:14). Despite the fact that Paradise seems to be an unusual entity and something that does not occur today anymore this is not an argument against its factual existence earlier on. Augustine uses this argument against those who only want the literal, and thus historical-factual, meaning of Genesis to begin after Adam and Eve had been turned out of Paradise.

Augustine makes it clear that he argues here especially against people who believe in Scripture but want to maintain only a spiritual sense (Gen.litt. 8.1,4), that is a particular group of Christians. But even against the Manichees, who do not believe in the validity of the paradise account at all, he wants to defend its literal sense in a way "that those who, prompted by an obstinate or just stupid turn of mind, unreasonably refuse to believe these things may still find no grounds at all on which to convict them of being false." (ibid.). Augustine does not mind if the Paradise account is also taken spiritually, yielding rich lessons for the reader but insists that the literal sense has to be maintained. Otherwise the beginning of humankind altogether is put in question if, for instance, Cain and Abel are also interpreted as only figurative, or the scriptures are then accused of lying. His condition is that the literal sense must accord with truth and with the rule of faith (ibid.). Augustine will expound this in the rest of Book 8 and Book 9 in greater detail. His universal argu-

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[56] E.g. Epiph., panar. 64.42, Jerome, ep. 51.5-7; Chrys., hom. in Gen. 13.3; Lact., inst. 2.13.

[57] In particular Or., princ. 4.16; hom. in Gen. 2.

[58] E.g. Philo, LA 1.43, plant. 32, QG 1.6; Ambr., parad. 1.5f.; 11.51; ep. 45.3, like Philon preferring the allegorical interpretation; Jerome, Quaest. in Gen. 2.8. See for this the excellent remarks in P. Agaësse / A. Solignac, *La Genèse au Sens Littéral*, in: BAug 49 (2001), 497-499.

mentative ambition, reminding of that in the *City of God*, is quite visible here, although again his main addressee will be Christian and should be protected with arguments against intellectual temptations from Manichees and pagan intellectuals alike.

5. Conclusion

As already mentioned, similar to satire, apologetics can not just be linked to a specific literary genre but is also a technique or mode of thought to be encountered in all sorts of literary genres.[59] Apologetics is defined by a particular set of arguments or problems and by a particular argumentative strategy that is rational and willing to take the opponent's point of view on board and to argue by adopting the (not necessarily only pagan[60]) opponent's categories or criteria. This process of inculturation (*sub specie pagana*) does not only mean the representation of Christian thinking in a 'pagan' (or other critical) mode, but also the transformation of the opponent's thoughts, ideals or values into a Christian world view. The arguments are recurring as they are dictated not only by the opponents but by the issue at stake in principle, i.e. matters of faith. The method is relatively flexible and follows the rules of ancient rhetoric,[61] especially as developed for the forensic speech, with the aim of persuasion; therefore it has to be closely linked to the (perceived or actual) nature of the opponent.[62] Persuasion in this context does not only mean to defend one's own position but also to assert its superiority over all

[59] See also the contributions by Anders-Christian Jacobsen and Anders Klostergaard Petersen in this volume.

[60] See implicitly Dulles, 1971, 66 who takes e.g. Aug., Faust. into account, and mentions 67 Augustine's "debates with Jews and Manichaeans". Ackermann and Fiedrowicz confine apologetics to anti-pagan argumentation.

[61] Therefore apologetic writing can also include invective and self-praise, see the papers by John Barclay, Eve-Marie Becker and Maijastina Kahlos in this volume. Augustine is relatively sparing with open self-praise in his work in general, but invective in various more or less subtle shapes informs many of his writings.

[62] Already Cicero and Quintilian emphasize that good psychological knowledge of human nature will make a speaker more persuasive and thus successful.

others. So there is a strongly protreptic intention linked to Christian apologetics,[63] directed both at non-Christians and Christians alike.

Apologetics is particularly needed in times of transition and change, in (perceived or actual) crisis and conflict, where the intellectual preoccupation is more with history than with metaphysics.[64] There are intellectually critical opponents, but there also has to be a group of defenders of sufficient educational standard to be able to conduct the discussion with (mostly) rational arguments instead of physical force and violence, having the skill both to communicate within the thought system of the opponent and to express their own conviction at least to a certain degree along that thought system as well.[65] But as the nature of the Christian faith is to live in constant suspense this genre has a timeless agenda as it were, continuing through the ages, also allowing for self-correction from time to time (*sub specie aeternitatis*).[66] In this wider frame, the 'opponent' is not necessarily just 'pagan', but can be positions of atheism or of (also inner-Christian)[67] rational criticism, and other confessions and beliefs. He can even go so far as to concede that the heretics with their critical questions dynamically trigger orthodox readings

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[63] For the special case of Jewish apologetics see the paper by John Barclay in this volume.

[64] Dulles, 1971, 71, who calls this the "historical apologetic of the later Fathers", implicitly allowing for other kinds of apologetic as well.

[65] Cf. W. Geerlings, *Apologetik und Fundamentaltheologie in der Väterzeit*, in: HFTh 4 (2000), 217-230 (217f.).

[66] See also Fiedrowicz, ²2001, 15. 312-315. Dulles, 1971, 71 is imprecise when she claims that the "leading apologists are almost unanimous in opting for a synthesis of Biblical faith with classical culture."

[67] Thus, Greene-McCreight's separation (K. Greene-McCreight, *Ad litteram. How Augustine, Calvin, and Barth Read the "Plain Sense" of Genesis 1-3*, New York 1999, 12) into intra-communal, i.e. didactic-protreptic, catechesis, and extra-communal writings against Jews, heretics and pagans is only valid on a formal level, as even in writings against non-Christians it can actually be Christians that are the intended addressee; at 80 she speaks correctly of "intra-communal and extra-communal apologetics." On the other hand, a work that looks like pure inner-Christian edification can have an apologetic agenda as well, as J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, Sinner and Saint. A New Biography*, London 2005, 9 convincingly states for Aug., conf.

of the Bible: "For thanks to heretics the catholic faith is asserted, and through those who think wrongly, those were made credible that think well. For many things lie hidden in the Scriptures; and when the heretics were cut off, with their questions they kept the church of God moving: what was hidden was revealed, and the will of God was understood" (en.psalm. 54.22: *etenim ex haereticis asserta est catholica, et ex his qui male sentiunt probati sunt qui bene sentiunt. multa enim latebant in scipturis; et cum praecisi essent haeretici quaestionibus agitaverunt ecclesiam dei: aperta sunt quae latebant et intellecta est voluntas dei*).

Apologetics has to face certain inherent tensions in its very way of proceeding. First, despite a deep-rooted distrust or even denial of human reason as being able to represent God and his divine purpose in an adequate way, apologetics uses this method, mainly in order to engage intellectually with opponents to satisfy enquiries based on reason. Secondly, and connected with it, is the problem of how far apologetics is willing to yield to the demands of the argumentative opponents and to accept their criteria or metaphysical view of the world. The extreme poles between which apologetics can move here, are on the one hand the more or less complete loss of Christian identity ('Hellenisation of Christianity'), and on the other hand, the more or less complete 'fundamentalist' overwhelming of these opponents by hammering in certain convictions, something for instance pointed out by Dietrich Bonhoeffer:[68]

> The attack by Christian apologetic on the adulthood of the world I consider to be in the first place pointless, in the second place ignoble, and in the third pace unchristian. Pointless because it seems to me like an attempt to put a grown-up person back into adolescence, i.e. to make him dependent on things on which he is, in fact, no longer dependent, and thrusting him into problems, that are, in fact no longer problems to him. Ignoble because it amounts to an attempt to exploit a person's weakness for purposes that are alien to

[68] In a letter from his Berlin prison dated from 8 June 1944 (DBW 8 [1988], 478f.).

him and to which he has not freely assented. Unchristian, because it confuses Christ with one particular stage in human religiosity, that is, with a human law.

Every apologetic effort looks for a point of contact with the partner of the debate[69] and therefore has to find its position within these two poles.[70] As quoted at the beginning of this chapter, already Aristotle noted that the views of our opponents dictate our enquiry, something Augustine rather applauded than feared. Indeed he, like Aristotle, managed thus to produce highly original and timeless work, as his super-apology *The City of God* easily demonstrates. On the other hand, the danger of a fundamentalist fixation is reflected in Augustine's statements quoted in the title of my lecture: "No one believes something unless he or she has first thought of it as something that ought to be believed." Faith is not exhausted or exhaustible through intellectual activity, but faith is not un-intellectual either. That allows us to explore, negotiate and reformulate the fundamentals of life and faith, especially in situations of crisis or conflict, like Augustine did during his entire life as a writing Christian.

[69] TeSelle, 1974, 39f.

[70] Dulles, 1971, 68f. claims that the first half of the *City of God* "is the most brilliant of all the Christian refutations of pagan religion thus far examined," but quite rightly asks 71: "Did not the Christians and Neoplatonists [...] fall into identical errors in their excessive reverence for personal religion, for eternal truths, and for sacred tradition?"

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